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Photo by Christopher Glancy



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ED'S RANT TO BE OR NOT TO BE



In the MTV and internet age, music has taken on a hyperreal quality. Does Jennifer Lopez really know how to sing, or is AutoTuner just that amazing? Do Jay-Z and R. Kelly really have beef, or is it all a publicity stunt to move more units? Is Gwen Stefani really inspired by Vivienne Westwood? Only her stylist knows for sure.

Pop's over-the-top ridiculousness, accompanied by the current insignificance of subcultural signifiers (what do mohawks and studded belts mean when frat boys are rocking them?) makes music and art that means something more important than ever. And in reading and rereading the stories for this issue, I'm struck by how the simple act of being an individual can be revolutionary.

Sly & Robbie, the dub icons on our cover, have persisted over 30 years in the music business and their music is still inspiring—especially if the number of times I've heard Grace Jones' "Pull Up to the Bumper" played in clubs over the last two months is any indication. They've managed to traverse dub, reggae, dancehall, and even pop precisely because they aren't manufactured—they did what came naturally instead of listening to people who tried to tell them what niche to fit in.

Likewise, The Soft Pink Truth's Drew Daniel has managed some head-exploding dance music, wherein ass shaking and PhD-level cultural theory rub up against each other; Tigersushi won't let anyone tell them that putting out folk albums, no wave reissues, and minimal house side by side doesn't make sense; and UK garage MC Sovereign, girded for battle in head-to-toe Adidas, doesn't really care if you think that a 17-year-old, five-foot-tall white girl can't spit lyrics. She can, so fuck you.

As if we're not inspired enough by the individuals we write about, we're lucky enough to work with some of the most interesting people on the planet. Round these parts, huge creative blocks and massive bouts of depression (usually caused by no good music coming out) are a weekly occurrence. But every time I start feeling like I'm never going to get my mojo back, something floods in my email inbox, someone IMs me a wicked link, or I get a CD that makes life worth living again.

On a freezing cold stupid Tuesday where everything was going wrong, my day was brightened by trading funny emails with our art director about The Soft Pink Truth photo shoot and writing back and forth with journalist Rob Geary about eating pierogi. Swamped in deadline mire, I saw the first round of proofs—Nigel Dennis' amazing cover art, Grey's freestyle tags on the garage piece, and the beautiful fashion spread by photographer Chris Glancy and stylist Desiree Zondag (make sure you watch the accompanying movie on the *Incite* CD) made me want to soldier through.

I think I can speak for all of the XLR8Rs when I say we hope you get as much out of reading this issue as we got out of making it. And don't let the bastards get you down—the toughest challenge of all is just being yourself.

- Vivian Host, Editor



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ON THE COVER: Sly & Robbie illustration by Nigel Dennis

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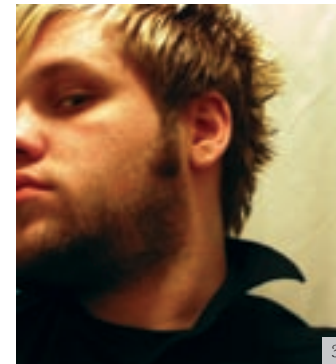
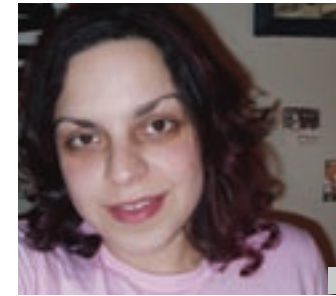
a **crutch** production



★ "Playful" by Shawn Barber

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1. GREY

Grey spent his youth sleeping at Embarcadero, touring with At The Drive-In, and collecting every Bis record ever made. These days, you're more likely to find him painting his name on trains, making up alternate lyrics to RBL Posse songs, and breaking hearts in 50 states. Grey's work has appeared in *The Art of Getting Over*, *Morning Wood*, *Thrasher*, *Artweek*, and *While You Were Sleeping*, among others, and he put pen to paper to vector for this issue's Femme Fatal feature (page 68).

2. CARLA COSTA

Carla Costa is a freelance writer who spends her days at an independent bookstore and her nights bedroom dancing to all things herky-jerky. She is a regular reviewer for *Punk Planet* and her rants on music and culture have appeared in *Women Who Rock*, *Gusto Online*, and *Kitchen Sink*. She calls Oakland, CA home but can't seem to shake her New England accent.

3. NIGEL DENNIS

I'm from Chicago and I sit at my desk making things look really nice. I want to make things look nice for the rest of my life. It is what I do. I am self-taught. I am looking to make what you want to look nice, look nice. Contact me and I'll do it. I am obsessed with *Nip/Tuck*, *The Office*, and *Reno 911*. I don't like ugly things as much as beautiful things.

4. LUCIANA LOPEZ

By day a mild-mannered reporter, by night a cranky reporter on deadline ready to go home, Luciana writes for the (Portland) *Oregonian*. She's freelanced from the U.S. to Japan, including (once!) for the *Washington Post*. She's probably sleep deprived right now. Oh, and she apologizes for not having a cool photo.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117. All letters printed "as is."

Behold, I won the grand prize: a buttery new Ubiquity Records record bag with a pocket for 45s and an iPod, as well as a bunch of Playstation basketball games with dope soundtracks. Not to mention a Ubiquity t-shirt and the *Bouncing Beats NBA 2K5* soundtrack CD featuring some ill hip-hop acts. Thank you XLR8R for keeping me in the loop over the years. Sometimes the Midwest gets a bit claustrophobic but your mag and the accompanying CD that comes to my mailbox once a month frequently cure my woes.

Here's my two cents on your coverage. I'm not too into the neo-punk stuff. I like the soul, hip-hop, and jazz coverage. You all are really good at that. I mostly read XLR8R for your top-notch graphic design and art coverage. I really dig XLR8R's perspective. I see it as humble and optimistic. When I read an issue, I get inspired to do what I love: multimedia art. How 'bout a Midwest issue?

Troy Turner
Director Of Marketing & Promotions
Themainstreamskateboardingmovement

Vivian responds:

Hey Troy, Thanks for the compliments on our coverage. As for the Midwest, we love it! We try to cover as many musicians and graphic designers from there as we can, but the reality is we don't hear nearly as much about what's going on in cities like Cincinnati, Minneapolis, and Madison (or your own Green Bay) as we do about the coasts. We welcome any suggestions of cutting-edge talent to feature, and we'll take your Midwest idea into consideration. In the meantime, check out this issue's cover illustrator Nigel Dennis from Chicago, Toledo graphic design wizard Upso, who runs the *Faesthetic* zine (also in this issue), Columbus techno producer Geoff White (#83), Chicago visual artist No Pattern (XLR8R staff illustrator), and Detroit's Matthew Dear, Platinum Pied Pipers, and Invincible (#83).

FROM GREEN BAY TO THE BAY

A month ago, I was looking at www.xlr8r.com. I hardly ever enter contests, but the prizes for the "Bag This" contest were so attractive that I gladly researched the history of Ubiquity Records and the Detroit Pistons to put myself in the game. Lo and

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- 2) Tell us who your five favorite MCs are.
- 3) Tell us your favorite hip-hop lyric of all time.
- 4) Lastly, tell us if you are a fan, a DJ, a rapper, a poet, a writer, a biologist, or what you do.

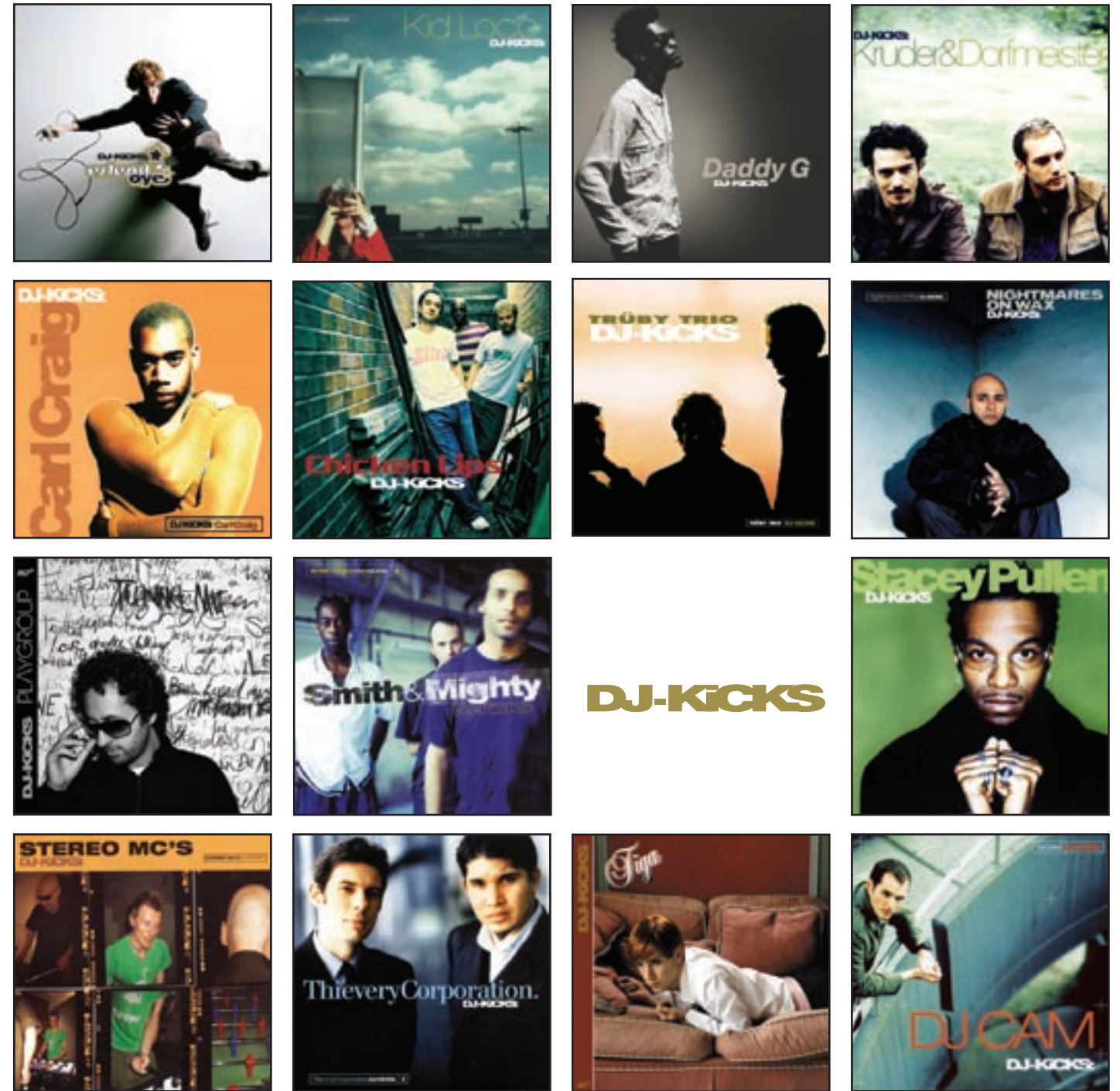
Most creative entries will win!

Five Grand Prize Winners will receive signed, limited edition copies of Aesop Rock's *The Living Human Curiosity Sideshow*.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Entries will be received until April 1, 2005. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Book Of Rhymes" contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "Book of Rhymes" Contest in the subject line.



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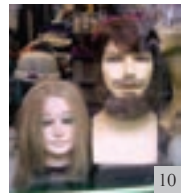
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BITTER BASTARD'S GUIDE TO MUSIC



You like music? Oh my god, I like music too. That's bizarre. I mean, really, that is so karazeeeeeee. We must be soulmates. Swear. But so many people just don't really get music, you know? They're always asking me, like, what's that stuff I listen to and stuff? So this one night when I was, like, totally fucking faded I fully made this list to explain it to them. And it sucked 'cos I was going to post it on my blog but then Myspace was down for, like, "scheduled maintenance" or some shit so I guess I'm going to have to put it here. But you don't really need to read it, 'cos you totally know all about music and stuff. Serious.

1. Microhouse sounds like...

Three alarm clocks, a ticker tape, seven garage door openers, six percolator coffee machines, and one of those crosswalk signals for blind people all going off at once in a rhythmic fashion. *See also:* bratwurst fests, black-rimmed glasses, glass figurines

2. Grime sounds like...

A 12-year-old in camo pants and those tennis shoes that light up when you walk who just stole a gram of bad cocaine from his older brother's secret stash and is sitting in front of the Nintendo gurning. *See also:* bad horror movies, farts, Muppets, jilted d&b producers

3. Italo-disco sounds like...

Having your eyelids pierced by shards of a mirror ball while a gay elf dances around you clapping his hands and pissing golden rainbows. *See also:* the Space Mountain ride at Disneyland, the demo songs on Casio keyboards, bitter record collectors

4. Deep house sounds like...

The wind wafting through your lobotomized brain as a horrific girl in a sequined bra top humps your thigh and Gerardo of "Rico Suave" plays the saxophone in the background. *See also:* unwarranted positivity, herpes, fake tans, elevator music

5. Liquid funk sounds like...

A gigantic thug wearing a backless leather vest singing karaoke while nerdy, skinny guys play jazz standards triple-time in the background, badly. *See also:* cheap champagne, 40-year-olds, Kenny G haircuts

6. Glitch hop sounds like...

What your head feels like the day after you drank three whiskeys, two rum 'n' cokes, one Hurricane, and three weiner shots, then crashed out in your friend's living room on a mattress that had period stains on it, then woke up with the cat asleep on your head. *See also:* smelly socks, half-drunk liters of Coke, soggy roach ends

7. Future jazz sounds like...

When you're about to get in a cab and then some girl whose headwrap is too tight bumps you out of the way with her ass and steals the cab, and then a UPS deliveryman bumping R&B drives by and tries to pick you up as you realize that your underwear is showing. *See also:* standing around, pork pie hats, massages with rancid baby oil

8. No wave sounds like...

Trying to go to sleep and having a homeless crackhead couple outside your window singing Elton John covers, talking to themselves, digging cans out of the garbage, and playing detuned violins. *See also:* Allen Ginsberg, spaying and neutering, spoken word nights

9. Reggaeton sounds like...

Lil' Jon and Charo having a baby and El General and Shakira having a baby and the babies "playing doctor" inside a tumbleweed. *See also:* thongs, liquor in paper bags, parades, banana-flavored blunt wraps

10. Dance-rock sounds like...

Two wigs in a wig shop telling bad jokes to each other while the assistant manager blasts The Cars and stalks one of the models on Suicide Girls. *See also:* stacked heels (for men), freeballin', Gauloise cigarette butts



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BOYSKOUT

THIS SYNTHY SAN FRANCISCO TROOP DELIVERS DANCEABLE MELANCHOLY.

WORDS: CARLA COSTA PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK

When Leslie Satterfield started Boyskout in 2001 she had something to prove. After working on a quiet, moody solo project (Cat Power's *What Would the Community Think* was a major influence) she was determined to show people that her sound could be, well, tougher. Three years later, the band's debut LP, *School of Etiquette*, put the exclamation point at the end of Satterfield's declaration.

Boyskout's brand of dreamy, danceable melancholia is a whirr of guitars and dark synth keys led by Satterfield's breathy vocals; her voice is equal parts plaintive and spry, mirroring the irresistible push/pull of personal relationships laid out in her lyrics. Some listeners have labeled it another copycat of The Cure or Suicide, but Boyskout sets itself apart from the recent rash of hybrid new/no wave bands with strong musicianship and a complete lack of pretension that comes with a genuine love of music. Take Satterfield's current source of excitement—the band's new keyboard, which comes equipped with the eerie Wurlitzer sound she loves. "I really feel drawn

to kind of a haunting sound," Satterfield says. "That would be the thing that is at the center of every single song that I write. It's just what I think is beautiful."

After a brief but successful stint in New York City, a couple of years worth of line-up changes, and a national tour, Satterfield is back home in San Francisco with the steady crew of Zola Goodrich on keys and guitar, Piper Lewine on bass, and various rotating members on drums. Boyskout's new songs sound even stronger (if not as tough) and buzz with a lush, melodic wall of noise from Satterfield's guitar, evidence of her strengthened style and long-time appreciation of tripped-out troubadour Syd Barrett. "I think it's just a really natural thing to come back to having the songs be a little more chill," she says. "Maybe I'm putting more of myself into the songs this time—just more of who I really am."

In the meantime, the band is steadily honing tracks for its follow-up LP and looking forward to playing this month's SXSW. "People always tell me the more I show of myself the better it is anyway," Satterfield says. So far, so good.

School of Etiquette is out now. www.boyskout.com

Boyskout (l-r): Zola Goodrich, Leslie Satterfield, unknown drummer, Piper Lewine



Lisa Alisha



Bradley Askew



Travis Millard



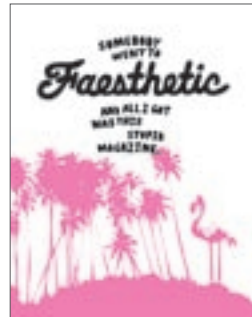
Karen Oxman



CISMA

FAIEST TIMES

FAESTHETIC ZINE TAKES XEROX TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL.



From the wilds of Toledo, OH, graphic designer, Stylex lead singer, and sometime *XLR8R* contributor Upso (alias Dustin Amery Hostetler) produces collectible art magazine *Faesthetic* (\$25). The title—a combination of the words “fast” and “aesthetic”—betrays what is an incredibly complex undertaking, taking nearly a year to produce and featuring 200 pages of black-and-white visuals from all corners of the art world. “Black and white is obviously cheaper [to print] than color,” admits Upso. “But I like how you can take 100 artists, turn all their art black and white, and when you put it together it turns into one huge piece. [It] blurs the lines a little bit in between people’s work.” The first *Faesthetic*, which started as a college project, was produced in the end of the 2000, the result of Upso trying his hand at making an art magazine he would want to be a part of. With issue #4 just released, he’s already got contributors—the likes of which have included Graphic Havoc, Jon Burgerman, Cody Hudson, and Neasden Control Centre—beating down his door for next year. Catch your own copy online, or through Turntable Lab, Giant Robot, Zakka, and Kid Robot. *Vivian Host*
www.faesthetic.com

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MITSU THE BEATS

JAPAN'S HIP-HOP SENSEI REACHES OUT WITH TRANSNATIONAL SOUL.

WORDS: PETER NICHOLSON

Twenty-eight-year-old DJ and producer Mitsu the Beats hails from Japan's wilder northern climes (Sendai in the Miyagi prefecture)—think snow monkeys and hot springs, not bullet trains and the world's largest city. Nonetheless, his ruthlessly smooth hip-hop is as metropolitan as it gets. Balancing an ear for hooks reminiscent of '93 with the boundless, borderless skills of Japanese MCs and occasional forays into broken beat, Mitsu is fast becoming a global talent.

Growing up on his father's Japanese soul music and what he called "standard jazz," Mitsu found hip-hop as a youngster through a Japanese TV program. "It always featured a dance battle with new jack swing-type music—artists like Heavy D," he recalls. Mitsu was hooked, eventually becoming a battle DJ and teaming up with 2002's DMC world champion DJ Kentaro. His horizons expanded even further when he met Taro Kesen of Jazzy Sport Production, who at the time was licensing tracks for the British label Laws of Motion. Mitsu developed a taste for the broken beats of West London and it was some of those DJs and producers, plus tastemakers like Michael Reinboth (Compost) and Patrick Forge (Kiss FM), who in turn began to champion Mitsu's production.

Mitsu says that he follows the basic formula for making hip-hop ("Listening to records, sampling and adding dope beats to samples"), yet his *New Awakening* LP (Planet Groove) is anything but formulaic. From the shimmering guitar that rests beneath Rich Medina's rap on "Do Right" to the restless rim shots and bass synth that push forward "Fly Away" with Lady Alma, it's clear that Mitsu has a special talent for adapting his production to the differing strengths of vocalists. Mitsu's collaboration with Dwele, "Right Here," features delicate-but-earthly singing from the Detroit soul vocalist and an unforgettable sax sample over gritty hip-hop beats 'n' bass—it's guaranteed to fill floors, though it's been two years since it started its rounds on CD-R. And watch out when his Japanese cohorts (like Hunger from Mitsu's hip-hop group G.A.G.L.E.) get on the mic, because their whip-crack, hard-edged consonants are the perfect compliment to Mitsu's extra-crispy beats.

As the forthcoming Planet Groove album of remixes, a planned G.A.G.L.E. full-length, and new 12"s for Jazzy Sport will show, DJ Mitsu's Sendai style can hold its own against anything from L.A. or London. Despite all this, Mitsu maintains a healthy perspective, adding modestly, "Me? I'm just a hip-hop producer."

DJ Mitsu the Beats' *Re:New Awakening Part 1* and *Part 2*, two albums featuring SA-RA, Mark de Clive-Lowe, Hunger, and more, are out now. www.jazzysport.com, www.planetgroove.jp

rolandfantomxa.com

access code: **xa06**





Blue car hood lit from behind, displayed at Luggage Store Gallery, SF (Christopher Woodcock)

FACE PLANT

NECK FACE DRAWS THE MONSTERS UNDER YOUR BED.

From Fort Greene, Brooklyn to San Francisco's Folsom Street, 19-year-old hobo Neck Face is disgracing the urban landscape with a parade of tentacle-eyed sewer creatures, long hairy monster arms, and vampire-toothed, spindly-limbed devils (who have a fondness for hanging stick figures from nooses). Most of the time, though, he just writes Neck Face, or sometimes "Neck Face is Ugly" or "Crack Pipe For Sale" or "Satan's Bride," always in a shaky block script that makes you wonder if he's actually selling that crack pipe in the first place. **Love him or hate him, this Northern Cali native has developed quite a cult of personality;** recent coups include a book with Kaws, an article in *The New Yorker*, a line of t-shirts for NYC skate shop Supreme, and gallery shows at Los Angeles' New Image Art and San Francisco's Luggage Store. Critics will no doubt compare his work to Basquiat or Mexican folk art or some such, but at the end of the day Neck Face is really the poster child for the new era of graffiti—where name, location, and nightmarishness trump letter forms any day. *Tyra Bangs*
www.fotolog.net/neckface



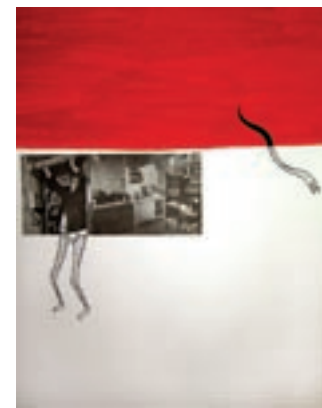
Detail of wall piece (courtesy New Image Art)



Various monsters on wall and wood, displayed at Luggage Store Gallery, SF (Christopher Woodcock)



Monster (courtesy of New Image Art)



Collage (courtesy New Image Art)



Street work on 7th Ave. in Chelsea (Vivian Host)



Metal monsters with framed drawings, displayed at Luggage Store Gallery, SF (Christopher Woodcock)

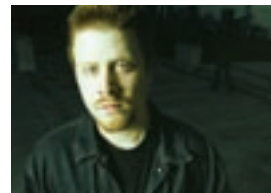


RAP SHEET

AESOP ROCK COMPILES A CAREER FULL OF LYRICS IN BOOK FORM.

Brooklyn MC Aesop Rock has never been someone to sit still and type. He's more engrossed with the art of storytelling, animating his characters on stage, and getting his point across to the crowd. But with the February release of his latest EP, *Fast Cars, Danger, Fire & Knives*, this hip-hop auteur is becoming an author of sorts. The first 20,000 copies of Aesop's CD include *The Living Human Curiosity Sideshow*, an 80-page book documenting raps and run-on sentences and spanning his whole career. While heads scan Aesop's verses, *XLR8R* asked the rapper to name his five favorite lyricists. Patrick Sisson

Fast Cars, Danger, Fire & Knives is out now on Definitive Jux. www.definitivejux.net



1. Slick Rick

"The *Great Adventures of Slick Rick* is one of those timeless older records. You can listen to a lot of other dope albums from over 10 years ago and you can tell they've aged, but Slick Rick holds up. He's super visual—he could be a 2005 MC."

2. Run-DMC

"They were totally into the live show. They based their whole thing on the fact that they were going to perform it in front of a crowd. It was sick. They were like 'We're going to come off raw on the record and it's going to be just as raw live.'"

3. Nas

"His first record was groundbreaking. 'N.Y. State of Mind' is probably one of my favorite rap songs ever. It's a healthy mix of being super raw and making references that aren't stating the obvious. In rap, a lot of the topics are going to be overdone. It's all about how you flip it."

4. El-P

"When I was growing up in Long Island, I used to listen to the Stretch and Bobbito show every Thursday night. They would play tapes, demos, and unreleased stuff. I heard 'Eight Steps to Perfection' on that show, and it was some raw, tangible New York shit."

5. MF Doom

"Obviously, since he was in KMD and from Long Island, I was a huge fan by default. He used to drop amazing lines, like 'Stringing them up higher than the '86 Nikes on the wire.' Now he's just polished it up further."

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HOOD
LEEDS' FAVORITE INDIE
ELECTRONIC BAND STAYS AFLOAT.
WORDS: TONY WARE PHOTO: STEPHEN ROYLE



Hood (l-r):
Richard Adams,
Stephen Royle,
and Chris Adams

“Hood is like a ship always tempted to push how far it can safely venture; at times it felt like it was sinking, but the water’s frozen around it and stopped the boat,” laughs Chris Adams of Leeds-based psyche mûché artists Hood, as he metaphorically describes his group’s dynamic. “We started as a speedboat two years ago [following 2001’s critically successful *Cold House*], then went round the various harbors and took on water; but we’ve been in for repairs and are seaworthy again.”

Together for 14 years, Hood’s latest cargo is *Outside Closer*. Adams, his brother Richard, and collaborator Stephen Royle form Hood’s nucleus, while a host of revolving crewmembers have con-

tributed across nine albums and 17 singles.

Hood’s last full-length, *Cold House*, was duskadelic, glistening glitch featuring micromanaged pastoral minutiae and stippled hip-hop from Doseone and Why? of cLOUDDEAD. On *Outside Closer*—the more instrumentally sumptuous follow-up—there are still masticated melodies and an underlying lo-fi twitter but no outside collective’s resources, which proves fortuitous. The band was forced to chart new seas, taking all production onto their own shoulders; they recorded and premixed at home before utilizing a friend’s studio for mastering and additional instrumentation. While thus entrenched, Hood faced a consuming and sometimes compromising process.

“We didn’t want [to go into] full-on philharmonic orchestra territory, but we wanted more real instruments, atmospheric things,” recalls Adams. “We didn’t have the resources to realize *all* our ambitions so, over time, we made judgment calls. What happened is we really wanted to make something poppy and brash. But slowly you realize you don’t personally listen to in-your-face records all the way through. And yet we didn’t want an album that was stripped back. So we met the ideas halfway.” The resulting mood and mode of the recordings befits the record’s disconnected title, and the vocal-laden music is Hood’s most approachable yet—though it’s still far from immediate.

“Though we’re widely considered melancholy, I don’t see our music as inherently sad,” observes Adams. “There’s a longing, but I think it’s inherently hopeful, offered as an eddy from horrid bustle. It’s about acknowledging the little disappointments while not dwelling on them or being despondent. With both our production reach and creative outlook, there’s that push to see what’s round the corner. It’s a total learning curve, basically.”

Hood’s *Outside Closer* is out now. www.dominorecordco.com



Buenos Aires Argentina 2003

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OUTSIDE THE LINES
STENCIL PIRATES CHARTS THE CUT 'N' SPRAY ART PHENOMENON.

Obsession might not be far off in describing **Josh MacPhee's *Stencil Pirates*** (Soft Skull Press; softcover, \$20), a relentless cataloging of stencil art across the world. The book's 1,000 photographs—including even industrial, post-no-bills stencils—make it clear that stenciling is constrained neither by geography nor aesthetic. From the Virgin Mary to T. Rex, Goya send-ups to dyke march notices, MacPhee's found it and given it a permanence a life on a sidewalk doesn't always guarantee. In addition to the imagery, the text adds weight; check the bibliography for its scholarship. Though at times taxing (knowing the Latin derivation of stencil won't really change your life), MacPhee's considerable knowledge shines through, lending context to all the amazing images. And should the book inspire, MacPhee so kindly provides stencils from a variety of artists, ready to be torn out, cut out, and slapped on the nearest wall. *Luciana Lopez*
www.softskull.com



OBSESSIONS: LEMON JELLY
BLISSFUL BRITISH DOWNTempo ARTISTS
ARE ALSO OCEANOGRAPHERS.



Lemon Jelly: Nick Franglen (left) and Fred Deakin

Producing smiling downbeat tunes as shiny and gelatinous as their moniker, Fred Deakin and Nick Franglen give the impression that their waking hours are spent fixated on trampolines and rocket-propelled rollerskates. Their first full-length, *Lost Horizons* (XL), was a whimsical smorgasbord that juiced everything from Latin and brass-band records to children's nursery rhymes. This January they followed up with '64-'95, a similarly mischievous collection of tracks each sampling an unlikely song from a particular era and style (think the '80s metal of Masters of Reality segueing to Gallagher & Lyle's '70s pop). Can parallels be drawn between the capricious reach of Lemon Jelly's record collection and Franglen's desire to throw himself to the open sea? One wonders. *Anna Balkrishna*
www.lemonjelly.ky

Nick Franglen on swimming out to sea:

"I can't stop doing this. By the time you're 30 strokes out you hit the regular swell. That's when you get your first taste of what the swim's going to be like. Some days the rhythm of the sea really grates, and you have to fight it with each stroke; other times your rhythm matches the sea perfectly, and every breaststroke pulls you to the top of a wave with an acceleration down the backside to help you along.

"By 200 strokes you're alone. At 400 you can't see the beach at all, and you're *really* alone. I've never made it to 1,000 strokes; the furthest I've got is 800. I blame [the movie] *Jaws*. You're nearly a mile out to sea, it'll take an hour to get back, and you know you're going to get eaten by a shark. When you finally turn round the distance really strikes you for the first time. You have to aim for the hills behind because you can't see where you set out from."



LOGISTICS
CAMBRIDGE, UK'S MATT GRESHAM PLOTS
HIS NEXT MOVE FROM THE HOSPITAL
WAITING ROOM.

WORDS: MARK PYTLIK ILLUSTRATION: NOPATTERN

In light of the way drum & bass has reshaped itself into one of dance music's most inclusive genres over the past 18 months, it's hard to believe that Cambridge's Matt Gresham once felt cast adrift from the scene. But in the beginning, the soulful d&b that Gresham was making under the moniker Logistics was so far from everything else going on in the UK that he was actually compelled to quit. "I just couldn't be arsed anymore," he says. "Everything I was doing was completely the opposite to the full-on, heavy stuff that everyone was making and playing at the time."

An aspiring visual artist ("I'm more about art than I am music"), Gresham enrolled in the graphic design program at London's Goldsmiths College, where he stayed for six months before a change of heart sent him back to Cambridge to concentrate on music. With the aid of his older brother and drum & bass luminary Daniel (a.k.a. producer/artist Nu:Tone), Matt began circulating demos and accumulating vinyl one-offs for various imprints. "I'd be passing bits to Dan who would then pass stuff on to people," he says. "It was the combination of me sending off lots of demos and having Dan as a brother who'd already worked with these labels."

It speaks to how dramatically things have changed that Logistics is now the toast of the UK's invigorated drum & bass scene. Following strong twelves for Innerground, Advanced, and Brand.Nu, not to mention name-drops from the likes of Grooverider and Bryan Gee, Gresham has inked an exclusive deal with London's upstart Hospital Records. "There are obviously a lot of decent labels in d&b at the moment, but Hospital seem to do

things differently," the 23-year-old says. "They're just a bit more daring in their approach to the whole thing."

Logistics' inaugural release for Hospital comes in the form of the double 12-inch EP "Space Jam." Melodic, spacious, and crammed with high frequencies, both the title track and the helium-huffing "Kaleidoscope" boast inventiveness that Gresham promises will be the benchmark of his eventual debut LP. "One thing I really want to do with the album project is work with more vocalists and try and bridge the gap between breakbeat and hip-hop," he says. "There's a lot of stuff that could easily please people from both scenes if done the right way."

www.hospitalrecords.com



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FLASHBACK
THE NEW ACID HOUSE FASHIONS

Ditch the all-black uniform and the asymmetrical cuts. This spring is about ridiculous pastels, over-the-top graphics, and sloganeering—essentially, the return of rave fashion. Get ready to make spring 2005 the new Summer of Love, and cross your fingers that absurd tracksuits and big yellow smiley face t-shirts stay in the past. *Tyra Bangs*

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TA'RAACH
 ONCE LACKADAISICAL, THIS
 DETROIT MC CAN'T SIT STILL
 WORDS: TAMARA WARREN PHOTO: TSHANTI2005

Real-life lyricism. That's what intrigues MC, producer, and DJ Ta'Raach, who was known as Lacks, Lacksidaisical, and Elevator Music before settling on his middle name for recording purposes. Ta'Raach isn't concerned with the pomp and circumstance of hip-hop hype; rather, he's compelled by the twists and turns of rhyme, meter, and diction.

"I write poetry stanzas. I used to be off in another world," he says of his abstract concepts. "Now I'm trying to be more grounded. I've been experimenting, and through experimenting, releases come out of it." As an example, he throws out a recent rhyme co-authored with MC Invincible on a cut called "Reel to Real": "If life's a bitch/I'll switch/Make Invincible my girl/We could be twice as rich."

Raised in Detroit, Ta'Raach began dabbling with music composition as his high school friend, the now globally renowned R&B singer Dwele, tapped out keyboard melodies. He formed the Breakfast Club in 1997 with Dwele, Big Tone, and Slum Village's Elzhi. In 2001, he became more serious about releasing music, teaming up with producer Jay Dee for the sleeper hit "It's Like That" on Slum Village's *Welcome to Detroit* album. Rapping over Jay Dee's clipped beats, Ta'Raach wooed listeners with clever lines: "Respect my gunning/I speak with a double barreled slang/In unison with this music in the back part of my brain."

Intrigued by a range of musical approaches, he joined Carl Craig's Innerzone Orchestra tour as an MC later that year and cut several singles with the group. Accumulating a sizeable batch of music, he partnered with

German label and distributor Groove Attack to release a compilation, *Re: Lacks Vol. 1 with the World*, in 2003, setting him apart as a producer and MC.

In the past year, his workload has gone into overdrive. Amp Fiddler, Wale Oyejide, Kirk Degiorgio, and Sol Uprising feature him on recent albums. He is completing an album project for Shaman Work this spring with two singles dropping on his label Lovelution. Collaborations with UK future jazz producer Modaji, Ubiquity's Platinum Pied Pipers, and MCs Big Tone and Chris Prolific are also due for release early in the year. If you're getting the feeling that lackadaisical no longer describes Ta'Raach, you'd be right.

Ta'Raach's next album will be out soon on Shaman Work. www.shamanwork.com



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**SOMEWHERE:
TBILISI, REP. OF GEORGIA**
DARING TECHNO ARISES FROM THE HEART OF THE CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS.



Ushba Mountain in Tbilisi

In Russian, *goslab* means state laboratory. In French, children's lab. For electronic musicians Tusia Beridze and Gogi Dzodzuashvili, Goslab is an adopted name, one they and several other multimedia artists (including Nika Machaidze, Tamuna Karumidze, and Zaza Rusadze) from Tbilisi (the capital of the former Soviet Republic of Georgia) apply to their creative output. Beridze and Dzodzuashvili's recordings, released as TBA and Post Industrial Boys respectively, decode the moniker a little. Goslab is defined as much by the post-Soviet experience as it is by ingenuous play.

"In the early '90s, we were a group of friends who had no communication with society, everyday talking about art, music, film, books," explains 33-year-old Dzodzuashvili. "We helped each other survive during the hell period in Tbilisi. We made it all right because each of us reflected it in our work."

Though Georgia has recently moved more into the global political fold, Georgian electronic music, if there is such a thing, remains harder to map. Listening to *TBA*, 25-year-old Beridze's debut on Thomas Brinkmann's Max Ernst label, for example, one wonders whether it's experimental classical music, fragments of a film score or far-out minimal techno. Sparse beats intermittently echo like clues in a detective novel, reminding the listener she's on the trail of a song.

If Beridze's genre is the detective novel, then Dzodzuashvili's is satire. Dzodzuashvili wrote music for theaters and dance companies in Georgia, as evidenced by *Post Industrial Boys* (also on Max Ernst), a collection of deadpan threnodies to the 20th century. Friends from Goslab contribute

Georgian and English vocals about cops, melons, and mediocrity.

"I like humor in music," Dzodzuashvili says. "When the words are emotional, I try to put them with music to the contrary. Because of that, sentiments don't bother you."

Whether with mystery or jokes, however, the focus remains on channeling the world through electronic music in order to create a new one.

"A friend of mine used to mock this Georgian mafia guy who was trying to screw a Russian girl," Beridze says, somewhat cryptically. "He'd say, 'Do you like it? It's yours!' It's a very funny idiom. Electronic music is exactly like this." *Michael Haggerty*
www.goslab.de, www.max-ernst.de

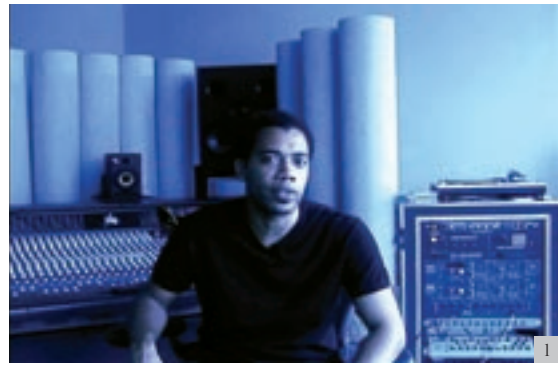


Tusia Beridze (left) and Gogi Dzodzuashvili performing in Moscow



Tusia explains these pipes are typical of Tbilisi, "rotten and with funny shape."





FOR THRILL SEEKERS

THRILL JOCKEY DVD SEARCHES FOR THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE MUSIC.



When self-described “geeky music fan” Bettina Richards, owner of Chicago’s influential Thrill Jockey label, started contemplating her label’s 10th anniversary in 2001, she decided to be an over-achiever. Instead of the obligatory compilation, she began working on *Looking for a Thrill—An Anthology of Inspiration* (Thrill Jockey, \$19.99), a DVD that explores the reasons artists make music. “I think the act of creating doesn’t get highlighted enough anymore,” said Richards. “It’s more about who’s selling records and who’s hot.”

Along with director Braden King and editor Ian Williams, Richards asked over 100 musicians, ranging from punk icon Ian MacKaye to techno innovator Carl Craig, to speak on camera about their moments of inspiration. Unique moments abound, including an epiphany from Icelandic siren Björk, who was inspired to turn everyday sounds into songs after her son told her that car alarms were the cry of urban animals. *Inspiration* brings the label’s patented adventurousness into the visual realm. *Patrick Sisson*
www.thrilljockey.com

1. Carl Craig; 2. Thurston Moore; 3. Ian MacKaye; 4. Jan St. Werner of Mouse on Mars; 5. Azita Youssefi; 6. Aki Tsuyoko





Amon Tobin (Jocelyn Michel and Guillaume Simoneau)



Splinter Cell Chaos Theory screenshot

SPLINTERS IN HIS EARS AMON TOBIN SCORES HIGH ON THE SOUNDTRACK TO UBISOFT'S SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY.

Videogames have been a part of breakbeat collagist Amon Tobin's world for almost as long as music, so when Ubisoft approached him to soundtrack their forthcoming Xbox/PS2 title *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*, his response was automatic. But rather than commission a strictly linear soundtrack, Ubisoft came to the table with a much more compelling proposition: what if the game's music changed in accordance with the gameplay?

The idea's lack of precedent meant that it was up to Tobin to find a way to make it work. "We tried a couple of different options," he says. "We tried having one long track which we'd layered, so each layer would be playing constantly but different sections would be activated as things happened in the game. That turned out to be a very frustrating way to make music—the gamer's not always going to decide what he's going to do right at the end of the bar, so it had to be a bit more fluid than that."

In the end, Tobin found his solution by returning to a more song-based model. Instead of trying to write a single score that could change shape at the drop of a hat, he composed individual bed tracks for each of the game's scenes. "For example, in the exploration mode you'll get the bare essentials of the whole track," explains Tobin, "but as the pace quickens and the game's scenarios grow more heavy, elements of the track creep in and they'll happen instantly, just as an action happens to the character." The end result is a filmic, groove-based soundtrack that draws elements from jungle, electronic, and classical music; a limited collector's edition of the soundtrack will feature a mix in 5.1 surround sound.

As for what it's like to see his name in the credits of a major new title? "I've been playing games since I was a teenager," he beams. "If my 15-year-old self could see this, he'd be very proud." *Mark Pyllik*

www.ubisoft.com, www.ninjatune.net



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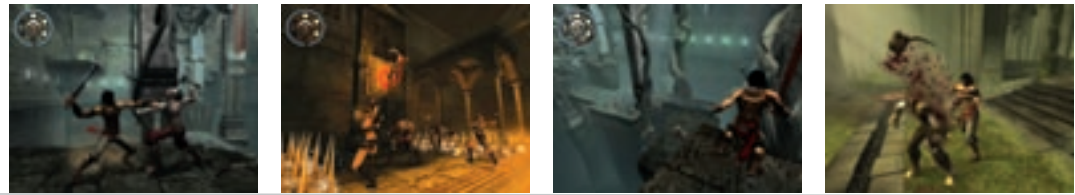


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PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN

The first *Prince of Persia* game was one of those serious button mashers that provided a combination of tricky, acrobatic puzzles and challenging, slash-and-hack fighting. It was so tricky that at one point I couldn't take it anymore, and at over 90% of the way through I literally threw my controller out of intense frustration (something someone in their 30s isn't proud to admit). In *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* (XBox/PS2; UbiSoft, \$49.99), the fighting and acrobatics aren't any easier, and the whole game has gone a lot darker, with your prince looking like a scarred and terminally pissed off Viggo Mortensen. The plot centers on turning back the Sands of Time as you're being chased by a rather nasty time-creature that runs after you from era to era. The fighting system has evolved positively and the graphics and scenery are breathtaking. I definitely rate this sequel highly, even if my tendons are now nothing more than floppy rubber bands. *Andrew Smith*
www.princeofpersiagame.com



THE MATRIX ONLINE

After the blowout special-effects extravaganza of the first three *Matrix* movies, where can the virtual-reality-gone-wrong-meets-slo-mo-kung-fu franchise go next? Why not release a fourth installment within the closest medium we have to *The Matrix*: the massive world of multiplayer online games. As the first ever computer-based sequel to a movie, *The Matrix Online* (PC; Sega/Warner Bros., \$49.99) for your Windows PC is a gigantic world based on missions given out by an online newspaper; you're given the ability to buy clothing (from in-game sponsor Rocawear), get hair cuts, and kick your fellow nerds' asses. Put together by the same creative team as the first three celluloid classics, *The Matrix Online* features plenty of voice talent from the original cast, including the one like Laurence Fishburne, but we've sadly lost the fine "acting" of Mr. Keanu Reeves. *Andrew Smith*
thematrixonline.warnerbros.com



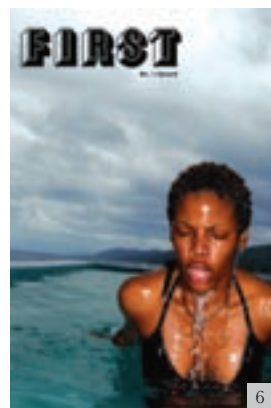
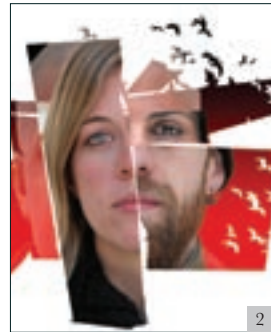
MECHASSAULT 2: LONE WOLF

Kraftwerk's concept of the "man-machine" was a utopian combination of silicon and the human form who favored pocket calculators and synchronized robotic dancing. *MechAssault 2* (XBox; Microsoft, \$49.99) also aims for an integration of the human and the mechanical, but in a much less peaceful way. You play a stoic mandroid who straps himself into a variety of giant, tottering mega-machines that fire a variety of weapons from their arms. And as if there weren't enough *Grand Theft Auto*-esque touches in every game these days, *MechAssault 2* allows your mandroid to exit his machine and hack in and use the bad guys' battle machines. Despite some pretty spectacular destruction, the single player mode gets stale after a while. Xbox Live is really where this game comes to life, with a slew of different multi-player modes. We are the (intensely violent) robots! *Andrew Smith*
www.xbox.com

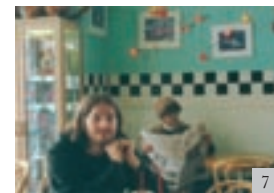


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(a.k.a. **Guru**) debuts his new project, **Guru 7.0**. Ya heard of Michigan mixtape king **DJ Graffiti**? If you ain't, check the bling-free brother at www.djgraffiti.com. **Babygrande Records** is thinking purple and will release the street rap comp *Road To The Riches: The Best of the Purple City Mixtapes* (Cam'ron and Dipset's boyz) at the end of March. Pee-pull are you reeeaaaaa-dee? Jason DeBeck (Selector JD) and Jeremy Freeman (Scratch Famous) breathe fire in their newly opened reggae store, **Deadly Dragon Sound**, at 102-B Forsyth Street (between Broome/Grand) in NYC. Check www.deadlydragonsound.com. **Nelly** gave \$50,000 to the **Martin Luther King Memorial Project Foundation**, which aims to build a memorial on the mall in Washington, D.C. Can you say "Pimp Juice for sale in the concession stand?" **Rita Marley** will *not* exhume the body of **Bob Marley** and rebury it in Ethiopia, as was widely reported in the media. However, the **Africa Unite** concert took place in Ethiopia in February, commemorating Marley's 60th birthday with performances by sons **Ziggy Marley**, **Stephen Marley**, and **Damian "Jr. Gong" Marley**, as well as **The I-Threes**, **Youssou N'Dour**, **Angelique Kidjo**, and **Stone Love Sound System**. The Middle East is united on **Jay Tripwire's** remix of Palestinian **DJ Adnan** and Israeli **Amit Shoham's** "Stop War" on Tarantic Records (www.tarantic.com). SF's beloved **Orthlorng Musork** are closing their gates for good, with one final release composed by Kit Clayton and Orthlorng Sue. 2005 is Bay Area media pranksters **Negativland's** 25th anniversary. Expect a national tour and multiple releases. **John Tejada** and **Arian Leviste** celebrate their 14-year music partnership with *Back For Basics*, a new full-length and the first album of Tejada's for Palette. Record any audio in super high fidelity on your **Edirol R-1** portable Wave/MP3 Recorder—it's only \$550 and you can't do that with iPod! **First** is the name of Jamaican photographer **Afflicted's** new magazine (www.afflictedyard.com). It's almost like an online version of *The Face*—but actually it's just a webzine called www.phamous69.com. Will we survive in '05?



XLR8R Magazine is a proud media sponsor of the first **Encompass** music festival (April 29-May 1). Day programs at **Old Truman Brewery** in Brick Lane, East London include live music, a retail fair, panels and debates, an advice group for aspiring artists, art exhibitions, and VJ showcases. Nearby clubs Cargo, Herbal, and Plastic People will feature artists from **Peacefrog**, **Metalheadz**, **Lex**, **Leaf**, **Soma**, **Accidental**, **!K7**, **Kitty-Yo**, **Tru Thoughts**, **Sonar Kollektiv**, and more. See more at www.encompass-london.com. California's **Ubiquity Records** won Label of the Year Award at the 2004 BBC Radio 1 **Gilles Peterson Worldwide Awards** in London this past December. Speaking of Ubiquity, that Detroit songstress **Tiombe Lockhart** (who lit up the label's recent Platinum Pied Pipers 12") just released her own 7", "Mr. Johnnie Walker," on **Giant Step Records**. **Björk** raised money for **UNICEF** by releasing a comp of remixes and cover versions of the song "**Army Of Me**." **Carl Craig's** hotly anticipated album on **Planet E** drops in summer/fall 2005, while Ann Arbor, MI's **Dabrye** *Two/Three* (Ghostly) sees light in June 2005. "Welcome to our netlabel!" announces **unfound-sound.com**, whose goal is to distribute high-quality, DJ-friendly mp3 audio files at no charge under a "creative commons music sharing license" (www.creativecommons.org). Their techy roster includes **Someone Else**, **Butane**, and **Ezekiel Honig**. Faster than you can say "**Fat Cat**," the pioneering British experimental label will have their very own US office in New York manned by Dylan Group/Mice Parade dude **Adam Pierce**. On April 19, **Baldhead Slick**

SPIN CYCLE
NEWS AND GOSSIP
FROM THE MUSIC
WORLD

1. Tiombe Lockhart; 2. Encompass; 3. Phamous 69; 4. Dabrye; 5. Ubiquity's award; 6. Afflicted's debut issue of First; 7. Adam Pierce; 8. Edirol R-1



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The Real Drum and Bass

From revolutionizing reggae to laying dancehall's foundations, Sly & Robbie have changed music forever. Over 30 years after their first encounter on Kingston's Red Hills Road, meet Jamaica's original Rhythm Twins.

WORDS: DAVID KATZ ILLUSTRATION: NIGEL DENNIS



Outside Sonic Sounds studio, Robbie Shakespeare is gesticulating wildly as he shouts a string of expletives into a mobile phone. Someone owes him money somewhere, and he's apparently unhappy about it. He's a big guy with a hefty frame who once served time in a notorious Jamaican prison on a gun charge, so whoever's on the other end of the line must be sweating. Inside the studio, Sly Dunbar is the essence of calm as he adds some live percussion to a new computer rhythm; once the basic structure is in order, Robbie plugs in his instrument and deeply locks into the groove.

Reinventing Riddim

Sly is the yin to Robbie's yang: if Robbie represents the sonic brawn of the partnership, Sly clocks in as the mechanical brains, a human machine virtually driven by the drums. Their unique chemistry has made them one of the greatest rhythm sections in the world.

Robbie says the two first met in the early 1970s while working the Kingston nightclub circuit. "First time I see Sly was on Red Hills Road where there was one club named Tit For Tat and one named Evil People. I was playing with the band Big Relation at Evil People and when we finished [keyboardist] Touter Harvey said he's going to check this band named Skin Flesh and Bones. I go over there and see Sly and it sound wicked. We was doing a lot of recording and I was one of the main man with the Aggrovators band, so I call in Sly and we build a lot of tracks; everybody say Sly Dunbar sound wicked and the two [of us] together sound good. After that, I was one of the main Peter Tosh bass players, so me just draw fe Sly and there was no looking back."

"I always liked Robbie's bass," adds Sly, "because when we start meeting in sessions down by Randy's studio, we talk and ask questions. In those times, every musician used to respect each and every one, so we go and check one another, sit down and work out some music, design a few chords and things. That was then in Jamaica, but it doesn't exist no more."

After Sly appeared with Robbie on early Aggrovators sessions, Robbie was often a feature of hit-bound sessions held at Channel One studio with Sly's in-house band, The Revolutionaries. Sly names a 1976 concert at London's Lyceum ballroom, in which the duo backed the Mighty Diamonds and U-Roy, as a defining moment in their evolution. "They said that dubwise music couldn't be played live, so when we came and start doing it live—went to drum and bass and worked it—the people said 'No, I can't believe it! They're really playing it!'"

The following year, producer Derrick Harriott released *Go Deh Wid Riddim*, the first album to credit Sly and Robbie as artists. A natural next step was entering the production field as a duo, but

Robbie says the initial recordings for the Taxi label, which they relaunched as a team in 1978, met with much resistance. "We got some free studio time for ourselves and nobody didn't want to play at first. I remember I even stand up and cry and Sly said, 'Cool it, Robbie man, everything will just work out.' Then one day Gregory Isaacs came and give us six songs, and in those six songs was 'Soon Forward,' our first hit."

Synthetic Measures

It quickly became clear that Sly and Robbie were changing reggae forever. Previously, reggae was limited to strictly roots styles with spongy rhythms. Sly and Robbie slowly began to infuse harsh, mechanized action behind innovative beats, adding a rougher, more metallic edge to the music. Sly's early tinkering with drum machines and Simmonds electronic drum pads was soon copied by others, ultimately presaging dancehall music's computer-driven production values.

Sly's growing obsession with synthetic sounds coincided with a fruitful reconnection with harmony trio Black Uhuru, leading to a contract with Island Records. Sly and Robbie's dynamic backbeats helped make Uhuru the world's most popular reggae act in the wake of Bob Marley's death, and the Island link also saw the Rhythm Twins provide beats for three albums from androgynous funk chanteuse Grace Jones, including the backbone of her groundbreaking single "Pull Up To the Bumper." Working solidly at Island founder Chris Blackwell's Compass Point studio in the Bahamas, the team had state-of-the-art equipment at their disposal, leading Sly to experiment further with semi-electronic drums and basic drum machines.

After Michael Rose left Black Uhuru (following the group being awarded the first-ever reggae Grammy in 1984), Sly and Robbie delved further into the international arena. They made a series of collaborative recordings with genre-bending pioneer Bill Laswell in New York, resulting in the multi-textured *Language Barrier*, a landmark release featuring guests as diverse as Doug E. Fresh and Bob Dylan. "The Bill Laswell connection starts when we were in Compass Point and I was using the Simmonds drums," recalls Sly. "We had done this song that was really made for the James Bond soundtrack *Never Say Never Again*, but I don't think it came out too good, so we used that rhythm track to create something else

and that song became 'Language Barrier.' Then Chris [Blackwell] mentioned Bill Laswell; I don't remember if he was in Nassau at the same point, but we got turned on to him and we shared ideas. We did that album and the second album, *Riddim Killers*, which had that hit song 'Boops.' He hooked up people like Bootsy Collins, Mudbone, and Bernard Fowler on that album. It was great—he's a very creative person."

Dancehall Nice

Because they had spent so much of the '80s abroad, Sly and Robbie's status had taken a knock in their homeland; by the dawning of the 1990s, they were seen as out of touch and passé. But Sly is never one to sit still for long, and his ongoing fascination with technology meant the duo was able to bounce back with innovative dancehall beats, based largely on the bhangra form made prominent by Asian musicians in the UK.

"Me realize that everything was changing," Sly explains. "Most of the records coming out in America, they was programming beats. To get the sound that they were getting on the records, there's no way you could get it by live instruments; the whole sample thing came in and everybody start use drum machines, so we get to change too. When I was in England, I heard bhangra and, being a percussionist, I said 'This will be wicked to work with.' So I went back down and we cut [Chaka Demus & Pliers' anthem] 'Murder She Wrote.' When I first used the bhangra thing,

"They said that dubwise music couldn't be played live."

- Sly Dunbar

It quickly became clear that Sly and Robbie were changing reggae forever.

I used it on a song called 'Almshouse' with Capleton—used the tabla, but in Jamaica they call it the water drum. I'm pretty much into the Indian and Arabian sounds."

After re-establishing their credentials in Jamaica, Sly and Robbie reached greater international glory with *Strip To The Bone*, their 1999 collaboration with ambient mix man Howie B. "I don't know if Howie B's a musician, but Howie B is very creative—more creative with this than I would think," says Sly. "We never met him before, never really listened to his work, but once there's music to go in and make, we just go in and make it, do what we have to do. There was no ego: Either it work or it don't work, but you're not going to know until you try."

Awarded Orders of Distinction by the Jamaican government for their services to the music industry, Sly and Robbie show no sign of slowing down. After presiding over a Black Uhuru reunion in Jamaica, they recently released *The Dub Revolutionaries* and *Version Born*. The former, cut in London, is a finely crafted album with dubmeister Mad Professor featuring live instrumentation; the latter is another star-studded, multi-dimensional Bill Laswell collaboration. So what else is next for the Rhythm Twins? As I make my way out of Sonic Sounds, Drumbar and Basspeare assure me there is plenty more to come. "I think the future of reggae depends on Jamaica," says Dunbar, "but we need different sounds. With good songs and good singers to sing them, the future for reggae is great."

Sly & Robbie's *The Dub Revolutionaries* (Ras), *Version Born* (Palm Beats), and *Crazy Caribs Meet Mad Professor: Dancehall Dub* (Ras), which contains their work, are out now. The essential retrospective, *Sly & Robbie's Taxi Sound*, is coming soon on Auralux.

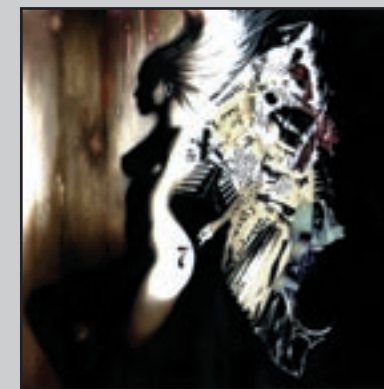


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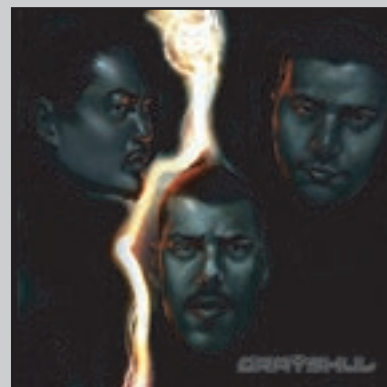
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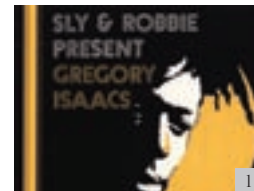
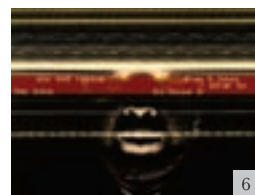
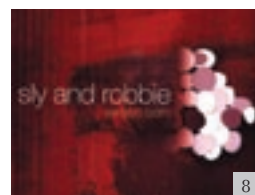
**GRAYSKUL - DEADLIVERS - CD & 2XLP
IN STORES 2.15.05**

Onry Ozzborn & JFK of Seattle's Oldominion, along with bass player Rob Castro are Grayskul. *Deadlivers* the debut full-length from Grayskul features guest appearances by Canibus, Aesop Rock, Mr. Lif, Abstract Rude, Fakts One and others.



**BLUEPRINT - 1988 - CD & 2XLP
IN STORES 3.29.05**

Debut solo album from critically acclaimed producer & emcee, Blueprint. As Weightless frontman and one half of Ohio dynamic duo Soul Position, Blueprint has crafted an album that does not attempt to recreate Hip Hop's past but in it's own way, pay tribute to the beats, breaks and themes of possibly the most revered year in Hip Hop, 1988!



THE ESSENTIAL SLY & ROBBIE RELEASES OF THE LAST 30 YEARS

1970s

- 1. **Gregory Isaacs Showcase (Taxi):** Incredible extended mixes of Isaacs' most militant work.
- 2. **Black Uhuru Showcase (Taxi):** Some of Uhuru's rawest recordings, given the Sly & Robbie treatment on extended mixes.

1980s

- 3. **Black Uhuru Liberation: The Island Anthology (Island Chronicles):** Everything you need to know about Black Uhuru and more.
- 4. **Sly & Robbie Language Barrier (Island):** The first, and still the most captivating, of their international releases.

1990s

- 5. **Sly & Robbie Dancehall Killers (Tabou 1):** The title says it all.
- 6. **Sly & Robbie with Howie B Strip To The Bone (Palm):** Ambient excursions with moments of brilliance.

2000s

- 7. **Sly & Robbie The Dub Revolutionaries (Ariwa):** A strong combination: Sly on metronomic live drums, Robbie on rumbling sub-sonic bass, Mad Professor on the "warbler" and myriad other effects. Brilliant!
- 8. **Sly & Robbie Version Born (Palm Beats):** A hodge-podge of sound with unexpected guests.



Softcore Hardcore



Matmos' Drew Daniel straddles hardcore punk, camp, and PhD level cultural criticism on his sophomore record as *The Soft Pink Truth*.
WORDS: ROB GEARY PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK



"I talk a good game about liking trashy stuff, but there is still kind of secret tastefulness."

In his round spectacles and colorful scarf, and with his silver Prius cutting through a typically gloomy San Francisco afternoon, Drew Daniel looks like the PhD student he is. It's also easy to imagine him as half of his band Matmos, the cerebral duo whose compositions are invested with as much conceptual insanity as they are endlessly tweaked samples and noise. But as we zoom around the city (first stop: Klein's, a "radical lesbian Jewish deli" with sandwiches named after feminist pioneers), Daniel's cutting humor and keen observations reveal the genesis of his solo project, *The Soft Pink Truth*.

Truth or Dare

Dared by ally and provocateur Matthew Herbert to create a house 12" for his Soundlike label, Daniel became *The Soft Pink Truth* in 2001, cranking out *Do You Party?* followed by *Do You Want New Wave or Do You Want The Soft Pink Truth?* (Tigerbeat 6) last November. At first, despite fearless explorations of the sounds of balloons and surgery with Matmos, Daniel was hesitant to tread in the house realm.

"I don't know anything about house," he says. "I'm a real novice or tourist, aside from [the fact that] if you're a fag...you just kind of get a free ride from going to gay bars, [where they play] a lot of really shitty hi-NRG stuff and sometimes decent house music." Finding the "spine" of house snares and hi-hats a welcome distraction from the wide-open structures of Matmos, Daniel fused bits of hip-hop and New Wave with a spastic sampling attack to create several singles and a first album. On returning to the alias, however, he found himself a bit stuck. "I did one 12" that had some remixes off *Do You Party?* and it had one new song that I tried to do in the style of *The Soft Pink Truth*. I thought, 'Well, I always have shitloads of ridiculous hip-hop and R&B vocalist samples. I know! I'll just get even more and chop it up...' And it kind of fell flat. That's when I realized if I was going to do another record I'd have to set that aside and look at something else."

That something else turned out to be *Do You Want New Wave...*, a covers record that hardly qualifies for that normally pejorative term. Attacking the American and British punk and hardcore that soundtracked his Louisville, KY youth, Daniel brings his ear for musique concrète, gut-level technology feel, and academically tuned mind to a set of songs that, in lesser hands, could sound like quaint artifacts. This being Drew Daniel, the record is no mere homage but a coming to terms with myriad parts of his past. "To go further," he explains, "you have a sampling/dance music aesthetic versus a kind of engaged ideological theme that's just completely hostile to its values. When I was into punk rock, I really didn't like dance music; I associated it with fags who

liked Erasure and it was lame and I liked Black Flag, so I couldn't be a fag, right? It was just part of the closet-part of how kids are, really us and them, polarized."

Dancing With Desire

Do You Want New Wave... is, in a sense, a psychological coming-out party for Daniel, despite his long-term partnership with Martin Schmidt. [The other half of Matmos, Schmidt joins us fresh from painting a workroom at the San Francisco Art Institute (where both have taught), mostly to hilariously roll his eyes at Daniel's crazy disco manifestos.] The cover art (by Daniel himself) smashes together the leather-and-chains imagery of hardcore with cloned, tuxedoed men and laser-emitting disco balls into a punk-style collage trainwreck that leaves gay texts and subtexts exposed. Add this to Daniel's increasingly fabulous stage shows as *The Soft Pink Truth* ("I almost need a wardrobe girl for all the costume changes now," he notes) and it's no wonder he chose to burrow deep into the punk/hardcore back catalog for some of its more lyrically contradictory moments.

That's not to say there isn't a whole lot of fun in *The Soft Pink Truth*. While Daniel doesn't aspire to make an out-and-out comedy record, it's hard not to smile when, at the cozy apartment lined with gear, records, and Matmos gig posters he shares with Schmidt, the sampler spits out individual words from everyone from Mel Brooks to Mary J. Blige to anonymous bargain-bin MCs to form the chorus to a remix in progress. But with humor comes the tricky question of camp, one gay artists have always struggled with—witness the high-wire career of John Waters, for example. "I did a Village People cover at a club called Tubesteak Connection," says Daniel, by way of explanation. "At this point they are like straight camp, like office party camp for the middle class. I talk a good game about liking trashy stuff, but there is still kind of secret tastefulness. Whereas covering Village People is actually dangerous—we're just so inured to it, it's not that canon anymore, it's just been neutralized."

A better description to his music, says Daniel, would

"I liked Black Flag, so I couldn't be a fag, right?"





be the wrongly maligned tag of novelty. “[Space age pop pioneers] Perrey & Kingsley get filed as novelty [for] showing what musique concrète can do in a shiny, sparkly way. I’d be honored if we were considered part of that...Humor in music sort of has to sneak up on you—if you’re *trying* to be funny, it’s pretty deadly. I think of people who use humor in music well, like the Butthole Surfers, and there’s a dark psychedelic thing—humor sort of creeps in the side door. Where something like Frank Zappa often is so aware of its own gag it doesn’t quite have the same sharp punch. I think Faxed Head are one of the funniest bands ever. I mean, a song written from the point of view of someone who cleans rest-stop bathrooms—that works. There has to be some emotional investment.” The emotional investment for Daniel in these songs is obvious, whether it’s wrestling with the ambivalently homophobic and blasphemous Angry Samoans song “Homo-Sexual” or cutting Crass’ “Do They Owe Us A Living?” with a rubbery, ass-swinging bassline.

So Do You, Punk?

One thing that must be made clear, however: While *Do You Want New Wave* borrows the thump of disco and the songs of punk, don’t call it dance punk. “My feelings about making this record were kind of a reaction to this formula. Dance punk—what does that mean? Punk was significant to me because of its lyrics; that they were saying incredibly offensive and intractable and demanding things. Punk rock wasn’t a style. For me—and this is maybe an American, puritanical reading of it—[punk] meant a certain unwillingness to play the game in relationships, business, or politics. So when you see people in asymmetrical haircuts going chicka-chicka on a guitar but not saying anything you couldn’t put in a Lindsey Lohan song [like] ‘I need your love,’ that offends the doctrinaire side of my reading of it. Which is also selective! Because of course punk rock was never so unified as to have a single position. It was a wide open field. So doing this record was a way of revisiting those contrary ideologies... I didn’t want it to be a cozy rewrite that says punk was always on the good side.”

Instead, Daniel sees *The Soft Pink Truth* in the tradition of punk collage art, with its careful juxtapositions of the serious and the comic. This is the aesthetic that powered his hilarious high school ‘zine *Conqueror Worm* and informs all his activities, be it academia, embroidering, or slicing up bits of sound. “There’s a kind of obsessive compulsive pleasure in just sitting and digesting sound, metabolizing it, and collecting these kits. I swear that’s my favorite thing in the world to do—not to finish a piece of music or play it for other people but to start one. I’m endlessly embroidering these onscreen waveforms. At 16, I was cutting up little pieces of Michael Jackson and at 33, I’m cutting up little pieces of Michael Jackson.”

Find *Soft Pink Truth* videos, gig announcements, and cultural theory at www.brainwashed.com/spt and more trivia at www.magicandaccident.com.

Pink outfit: Pants by Lily Pulitzer. Belt by J. Press. Knit shirt by Izod. Button for “The Business” from Tokyo. Screenprinted bandana from heavy metal fanzine *Stroker*. Shoes by Adidas. **Leather outfit:** Leather pants, hat, and boots from Worn Out West in the Castro. Rubber skull mask and skeleton hands from Cliff’s Hardware. T-shirt from Kimono My House, Berkeley. Leather jacket from The Family Jewels, New York City.



keep it surreal

Cracked LCD

Track by track, production mastermind James Murphy decodes the process behind making LCD Soundsystem's debut album.

WORDS: JAMES MURPHY, AS TOLD TO MARK PYTLIK IMAGE: JEREMY LAWSON

Since ditching punk rock in favor of dance music about five years ago, James Murphy's done his damndest to help indie kids get reacquainted with their backsides. In addition to comprising the American half of New York's lauded production group-cum-label DFA (with Brit Tim Goldsworthy), he's also the brains behind the celebrated LCD Soundsystem, whose vinyl singles "Yeah" and "Beat Connection" have enjoyed residencies on many a dancefloor. When it came to LCD's long-awaited self-titled debut, Murphy's always had something specific in mind. Below, he details the method behind the madness of eight tracks from LCD's debut.

"Daft Punk Is Playing At My House"

"When I was in punk rock bands, houses were my favorite places to play. If you went from one town to another, like Chicago to Seattle, that'd be a huge drive, so you'd play in people's houses along the way to get across. You probably wouldn't make any money but they'd be amazing shows, and you might make something selling shirts or CDs or whatever because a lot of these towns didn't have good record stores. As a grown married man, I'm not looking to haul ass around in a van and sleep on people's floors again any time soon, but that was something beautiful and I really cherished that time."

"Then I realized that a lot of people in dance music totally missed [house shows], and I got this notion that if I was ever going to throw another

house party, it would've been great to save money for years and years and hire Daft Punk. We'd do it through their main agent and not let them know what kind of show it was and then put them in a basement with, like, 60 kids! I wanted to have a video where we actually did that and make a live DVD, but they're in the middle of making their record so it became too cumbersome and impossible."

"Too Much Love"

"This is disco and Bowie and [Can's] Damo Suzuki. I like building loops, not necessarily for making songs, but just in general. I like programming without a grid and just making things that feel nice. I like using odd things to generate notes, whether they're drum patterns or basslines, rather than using synths."

"The vocals are by far and away the most painful thing to do, they drive me totally insane. I throw everybody out and I get really angry. I always write vocals in the studio the day that I record them—it's kind of a rule. It has to start from zero and go to recorded finished vocal by the end of the day or else I'm a disaster. I don't like vocals that sit around; I think they get stale and lose their meaning."

"All the harmonies on this record were sung separately, meaning I don't listen to the other ones when I sing them. I'll play a loop, sing the lowest part, then I'll sing the part above that, then the next part, but I'm not monitoring them. I like a lot of Eastern singing where there's no vibrato and the microtonal stuff is a lot more square; depending on the chord, the oscillation won't always be harmonic and so pretty. They're more unsettling that way, so I use the track as a reference instead of the vocals. When you listen to another singer and you sing along, even if it's just yourself recorded, you start making these adjustments that I find really gross and singer-y."

"Tribulations"

"This was another song that was a total challenge. It was written in about 40 minutes. I was trying to work with someone and I was like 'Okay, just write a pop song.' They said, 'It's not that easy' and I'm like 'No, it actually is.' So I made it as a challenge on my desktop on Reason. I was just trying to show my friend how to arrange, so I brought the loop downstairs and said 'Play it, I'll tell you when to turn things on and off, and I'll hook up a guitar and sing.' I never intended for it to be an LCD song, so I gave it away on disc to friends for shits and giggles and it started getting played a lot by people and getting shared online. So we started playing it live and I started really liking it and it became more of our song."

"Movement"

"That was written in the shower, specifically for a show. I just really wanted a song that was a strict and silly electro song that could be done identically as a rock song, so it's basically the song twice. It was supposed to stop there but I had fun layering ridiculous solos over it in the studio—we ended up going with the most retarded one. That was only after we were done doing all these grandiose, really disgusting, 'American Woman,' triple-tracked solos."

"I was getting kind of bored of all the [music press's] gabber-gabber about the new rock. 'The new rock is back!' And I'm listening to most of the bands and thinking rock is tired. I'm a huge rock fan, but wearing an MC5 shirt is not being in the MC5. For me, rock is not an outfit or a pose. I just thought 'If I'm gonna complain about rock, I should make some.'"

"Never As Tired As When I'm Waking Up"

"For about two and a half years I didn't have a home, so I lived in the studio. We were working on The Rapture record, and I would stay up at night and play the piano in the elevator, 'cause that's where the piano is. You could ride the elevator down to the basement and get lots of echo because it's open-topped or you could ride it up top and it's not that echo-y. I just wrote this song for myself at night; I write songs all the time and don't release them. We had recorded a song called 'Open Up Your Heart' for the Rapture LP and we worked really hard on the drum sound, bass sound, and vocal sound, and I was really excited about the way they sounded. So after they left at midnight, I made this song. After, I realized there was this big descending line that sounded like 'Dear Prudence': I thought it was funny and did a George Harrison guitar solo and then did a Paul McCartney bit—it was like putting a big X through something that you've drawn. I had it on CD for friends, like, 'Here, this is what I made yesterday,' and

Tim was kind of insistent; he said it was cowardly not to put it out. I realized it would be a good challenge to see if I could make an album that it fits on, so that became another challenge, especially to see if it could go with 'Movement.' And I kind of like the way they go together."

"On Repeat"

"This was purposely pulled back; it doesn't explode like most of the things I wind up doing for dancefloors. I've been listening to a lot of stuff that I really love that doesn't go so hard, like a lot of disco, I don't like when I go out and buy a dance record and put the song on, listen to the beginning and think 'This is pretty cool' then put the needle at the end of the record and it's still the fucking same thing! You've just been turning shit on and off for seven minutes! What the fuck have you been doing?! Just go do something, grab an instrument, make it change. That's why I love something like Vitalic's 'Le Rock' or [Josh Wink's] 'Higher State Of Consciousness' where you feel someone's intent, even their mistakes, you hear it."

"Disco Infiltrator"

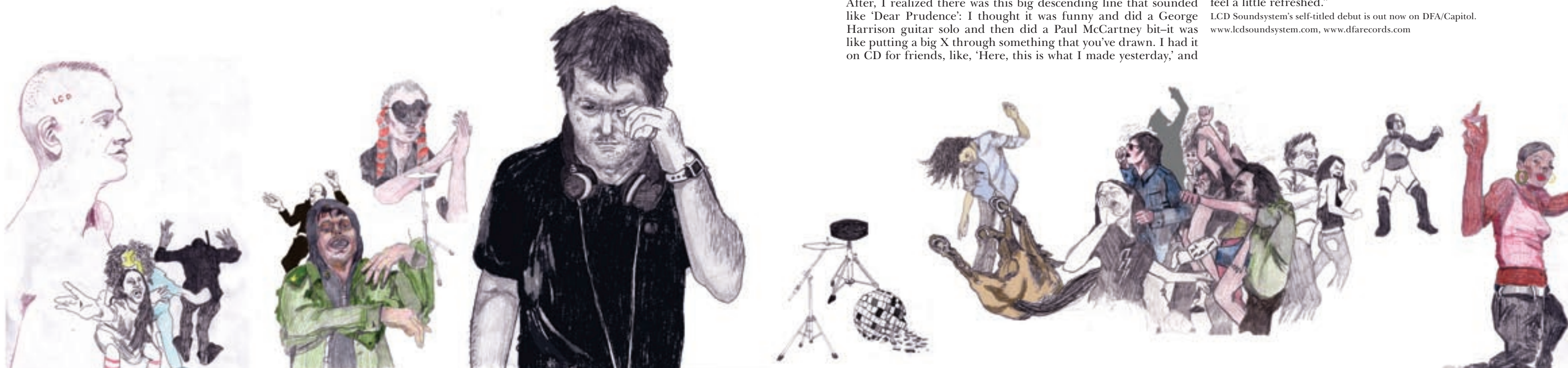
"That's one of the oldest songs. It was written long before 'Losing My Edge.' The beat is totally inspired by BS2000, by working with Adam ['Adrock' Horovitz from The Beastie Boys] and seeing how much fun he has. It only has one note, it's just switching octaves [and] the whole bassline never changes a note. I wanted to see if I could make a song where you could do that to do the bassline and no one would really pick up on it. It's fun; it's a game."

"I don't use Eno's Oblique Strategies. I've looked at them before. They're built for a more optimistic rock world, which is not the world I inhabit. I inhabit a far more pessimistic rock world and for that, I just talk to Tim, who used to run Mo'Wax and hates everything...and I hate everything, but we love music a lot so we sit there and find a little sliver that we don't loathe, and move forward on that."

"Great Release"

"I was obsessed with making a last song. I wanted to make something that kind of erased the record. I like songs that erase the record and make it acceptable to start the CD over again at the beginning; where you kind of forget how everything went and you feel a little refreshed."

LCD Soundsystem's self-titled debut is out now on DFA/Capitol. www.lcdsoundsystem.com, www.dfarecords.com





Triple Play

Hip-hop is more than a game to The Perceptionists, Def Jux's Boston super-team.

WORDS: JESSE SERWER
PHOTOS: JOE JOHNSON

The vibe in Boston is so good at the moment," The Perceptionists' Mr. Lif says of his hometown. "It's an ill time to be here—the region is just synonymous with excellence right now."

Lif isn't talking about the attention the city's historically ignored hip-hop scene has been receiving lately—he's referring to the success of the Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots, whose recent championships have helped redefine a city often preoccupied with the failure of its sports franchises.

The MC, born Jeffrey Haynes, might be best known as the dreadlocked, pro-black arm of the Definitive Jux camp, or as Boston's most politically conscious MC, but—like his Perceptionists cohorts Akrobatik (Jared Bridgeman) and DJ Fakts-One (Jason Goler)—he's a bit of a jock at heart, too. All three played high-school football; Lif, who also played nine years of organized hockey, was even recruited to play lacrosse by Colgate University.

So it's fitting that, despite the politically-charged anthems (like the Bush-baiting single "Memorial Day") on the trio's upcoming Definitive Jux LP, *Black Dialogue*, the group is making inroads to more mainstream audiences with "The Razor," a mixtape-and-internet-only ode to the Patriots that's gotten play at home games and even brought team owner Bob Kraft to a Perceptionists show in Cambridge.

In fact, it's their possession of Patriots tickets for the following day that's got Akrobatik spending New Year's night 2005 at Lif's pad, a basement apartment underneath his parents' house in suburban Dedham. "I predicted the Red Sox in Game 7 on stage at CMJ in New York and got booed," Ak recalls with a laugh while checking Lif's Ensoniq EPS for a beat Lif's just produced for the group. "And what happened?"

While athletic victory might be the source of Boston area brotherhood, the same can't be said for the city's hip-hop scene—despite what you may have heard. "Hip-hop in Boston is actually divided and busted up," explains Akrobatik. "There is a whole side that most people don't know about: talented artists that are having a hard time being heard," he adds, citing unsung street MCs like Dre Robinson and Smoke Bulga. "People say Boston is Akrobatik, Lif, Esoteric, Krumbsnatcha, and Edo. G and ignore the whole side of Boston that doesn't have the fanbase rooted in the college scene. Unlike a lot of other major cities, Boston doesn't have a [tight-knit] black community," says Ak. "It is very small and in some ways neglected."

Despite their billing as a Boston "supergroup" of sorts, the members of The Perceptionists—all of whom have been collaborating together since the days of Fakts' WERS radio show in the late '90s—say their emergence as



The Perceptionists (from left): Fakts-One, Mr. Lif, and Akrobatik

"I am not trying to 'blow up.'"
-Akrobatik

a unit has nothing to do with repping the wider picture of their hometown. "I plan to move out in the next year or so," Akrobatik says matter-of-factly. "It doesn't have anything to do with rap music—I have just been here my whole life. I am not trying to 'blow up,' I am just trying to make music with my people and hopefully our work ethic will provide us with some reward for that."

Nonetheless, there is a perception around the city that, like its sports franchises, Boston's hip-hop scene is finally thriving—that it's no longer the place Guru had to abandon for Brooklyn in order to make it as an MC. This past November, Boston hip-hop father figure Edo. G released arguably the best album of his 15-year-career in *My Own Worst Enemy*, a 10-song back-to-basics LP produced primarily by Pete Rock. Just two months earlier, Insight, an up-and-coming MC/producer from the same Roxbury neighborhood as Edo, released *The Blast Radius* (on local institution Brick Records) to almost uniformly positive reviews. MC/DJ/producer Edan, a transplant from Maryland who scored a leftfield hit in 2002 with the old-school revisionist LP, *Primitive Plus*,

recently completed its even more distinctive follow-up, *Beauty and the Beat*. And director Scott Limanek's *Boston Beats and Rhymes*, a documentary on the city's hip-hop circuit featuring the aforementioned MCs, began screening around the city last summer.

All of which sets the stage for *Black Dialogue*, perhaps the most anticipated Boston hip-hop record in recent memory.

"It was always a plan that after we got our solo albums done we'd do an album, even before the name came along," says Fakts, whose *Long Range* LP is still awaiting release by Coup D'Etat Records. (*I Phantom*, Lif's first official LP after nearly half a dozen EPs and a live record, appeared on Def Jux in 2002; Akrobatik's *Balance* arrived via Coup D'Etat in 2003).

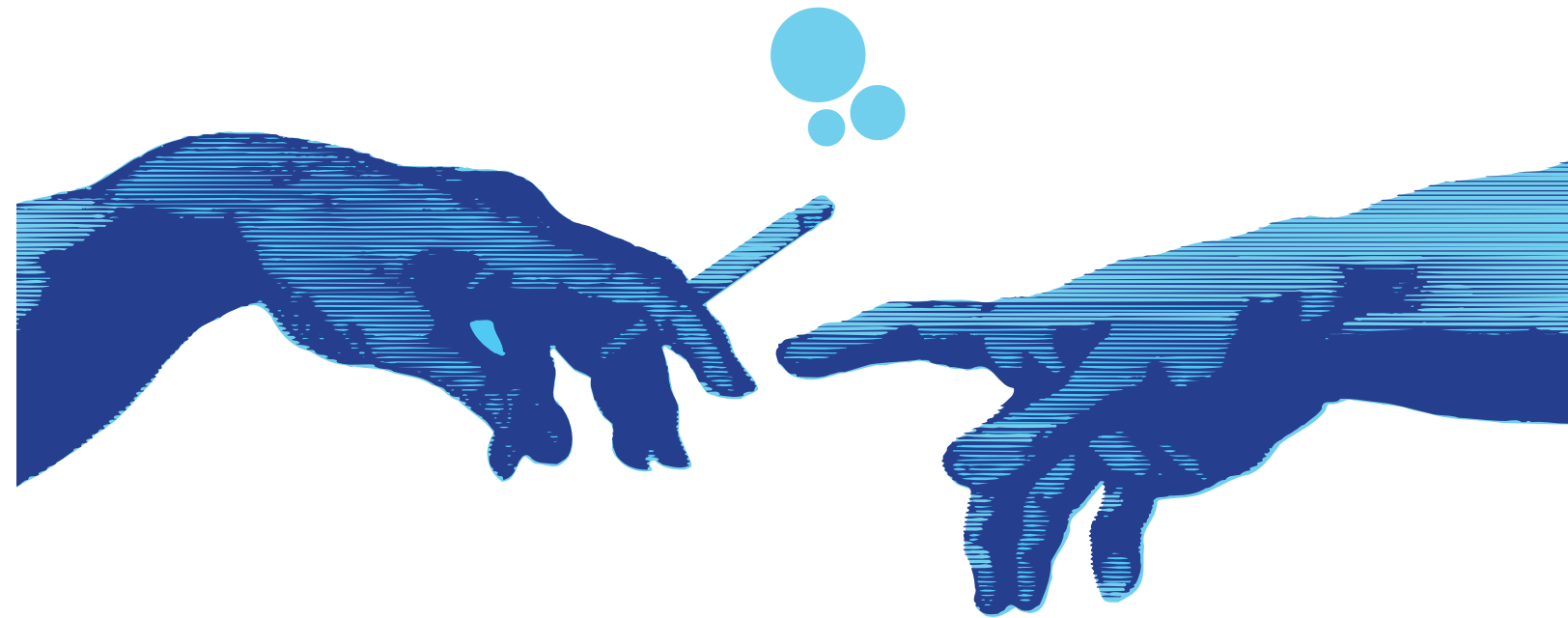
Produced by a four-man committee of Fakts-One, El-P, Willie Evans, Jr., and 19-year-old prodigy Cyrus Tha Great (who rocks a Joy Division sample into the album's standout track, "What Have We Got To Lose?"), *Black Dialogue* is the sort of chaotic-yet-cohesive debut you might expect from a trio of friends who've been waiting nearly 10 years to make an album together.

The record is alternately serious ("What Have We Got To Lose?" calls for revolt against the current US government) and playful (Digital Underground's Humpty Hump stops by "Career Finders" to help the crew run an employment service to get ignorance-promoting thugs out of rap). It doesn't stray from expected themes, but it isn't predictable either. Aware that the album's audience will likely be predominantly white, Akrobatik says the album's title and content represent an effort to reconnect with an urban, black audience.

"We're making music for the people we want to affect, regardless of the fact that most of them won't get to hear it," he says. "What if they get to hear it 10 years from now? What if something happens that makes it so that millions are hearing our music? Then this is the stuff we want to be saying."

The Perceptionists' *Black Dialogue* is out March 22 on Definitive Jux Records.

www.theperceptionists.com, www.definitivejux.com



Available at finer stores worldwide
www.syndrome.us

Tigersushi

The groundbreaking Parisian label dusts off the past and forges links with the future.

WORDS: ALEXIS GEORGOPOULOS IMAGES: JOAKIM BOUAZIZ



If electroclash represented the needless, and often desperate, repetition of nearly everything we loathed about the plastic '80s, another group of artists and labels—who we'll call by no clever name, thank you very much—took influence from the synthetic decade's more experimental inclinations. Enter Tigersushi, stage left.



Not content to devise new styles and/or formulas to co-opt, the Parisian label (and its accompanying website) has found itself playing tastemaker to the tastemakers of the dance underground, offering a sort of guide service for those interested in things fresh—whether old or new, electro, punk, or, um, country. Under the able-bodied tutelage of label owners (and consummate Frenchmen) Charles Hagelsteen and Joakim Bouaziz, our collective musical past, present, and future entwine like so many spiraling strands of newly formed DNA. While the releases are revealing new and telling links between unlikely and obvious sources, they're also inspiring dancing—albeit, dancing for the intellectually inclined.

Tigersushi started in 2001, after Messieurs Hagelsteen and Bouaziz bonded at university over a late-blooming obsession with electronic music. "We were a bit late getting into it and at first it was over Mo' Wax and the French Touch stuff," Hagelsteen confesses somewhat sheepishly. The first incarnation of Tigersushi, formed on the crest of the dot-com wave, was a website made by music obsessives for music obsessives, or at least those with aspirations thereof.

"To me," explains Hagelsteen, "the label and the website are evidence of connections [Joakim and I] had dreamt of between all music genres, times, and eras—a sort of infinite circle. All

music is basically interlinked, if not culturally and objectively, at least subjectively through your hearing sensations.

Creating a fantasy universe where Krautrock rubs shoulders with electro and dub clashes with punk, soundtrack music, and Detroit techno, the site—which features brilliant compartments such as a genre map, an "Unsung Heroes" section and a list of essential "Good Old Stuff"—is a wet dream for those with the desire to dig for rare jams. It's also a helpful resource to learn where today's underground stars have borrowed more than a little inspiration.

With the site up and running, the label proper introduced itself to the world in 2002 by way of the near-legendary *More GDM 12"* series, named after the late '70s underground hit "No GDM (Great Dark Man)" by Gina X, punk-disco's own Marlene Dietrich. The series pairs rare underground classics with new music from a related (or sometimes not) artist. The debut release coupled ambient Krautrockers and Brian Eno collaborators Cluster with the talents of Detroit techno progressive John Tejada. This was followed by the aforementioned Gina X classic packaged with New York Italo-funk couturiers Metro Area; still other installments featured Material with Maurice Fulton and Freddie Mas with ESG. On the idea of pairing old and new, Bouaziz becomes animated. "We like the idea of confronting artists from different backgrounds. It really brings music back to life. It says, 'Hey, I'm not coming from nowhere, I have



roots.' Or 'When was this produced?' You know, discovering music (should be) exciting." Hagelsteen agrees. "We just react to the music unearthed. It's that 'Fuck, this is good!' cold turkey feeling of 'I gotta have it!' I get [when a] friend exposes me to good music. It's like a heroin seizure, sort of."

This crate-digging approach has placed Tigersushi in an esteemed class of labels—among them Acute, DFA, Environ, Troubleman Unlimited, and Gomma—who get as excited finding a rare post-punk schoolyard jam or Italo-disco track as Madlib and Timbaland must get when stumbling upon that sought-after jazz or Bollywood record.

Subscribing to the pragmatic "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" school of thought, the label has continued with this approach for their *Kill The DJ* mix albums and their *So Young But So Cold: Underground French Music 1977-1983* collection. The mix CDs, from the likes of Black Strobe, Ivan Smagghe, and Optimo, leave no hot jam untouched, making the idea of genre-dictated mix-albums appear all the more insular and a hell of a lot less fun. On these audio representations of the kind of sets played at Parisian club Pulp, Loose Joints merges with Akufen, Luciano with Basic Channel, Blondie with Ricardo Villalobos. *So Young*, meanwhile, dusts off the obscure avant-electro of Nini Raviolette, Mathematiques Modernes, Charles De Goal and others, revealing that France's tradition of arty pop doesn't end with Serge Gainsbourg and Brigitte Fontaine.

"We never think in terms of genre," asserts Bouaziz, who also records as Joakim, K.I.M., and Poni Hoax. Surprisingly, then, Bouaziz reveals he "hates acid house, electro, and also disco, rock between 1975 and 1976, be-bop, death metal, funk before 1966, male soul singers, the second wave of Detroit techno, and a lot of other things." But he and Hagelsteen can see the bigger picture, he says. "We love music as a whole. And when we sign a new artist, it's only because we've been moved by his music or impressed by a potential. We recently signed a Chilean tropical garage band, a French rock band coming from a free jazz background, a young crazy girl from IRCAM (Institute of Advanced Musical Research), an IDM duo, and a French folk singer."

If Hagelsteen and Bouaziz hope to make, as they say, "music for the small majority" (to borrow an idea from Moodymann), they've succeeded with aplomb. And with a reissue compilation of the brilliant Belgian label Disques Du Crepuscule (responsible for releasing Arthur Russell, Young Marble Giants, 23 Skidoo, and Cabaret Voltaire) and French new wavers The Hypothetical Prophets to come, we can only wait with bated breath. "The philosophy of Tigersushi," Bouaziz concludes, "is basically to do the good instead of the bad, or at least something close to that." A subjective idea, certainly, but Tigersushi has earned our trust.

www.tigersushi.com



Panico

TIGERSUSHI'S FIVE ESSENTIAL TRACKS, PICKED BY CHARLES HAGELSTEEN

- 1. GINA X "NO MORE G.D.M"**
(from the *No More GDM Vol. 2 12*)
The essential compilation-defining track. This is the voice I will eventually get when I'm done smoking Gitanes.
- 2. BERNARD SZAJNER "WELCOME TO DEATHROW"**
(from *So Young But So Cold*)
Every time I hear this piano chord, I think of Robert Palmer's "Every Kind of People" and fancy drinking a Heineken.
- 3. PANICO "TRANSPIRALO"**
(from the forthcoming *Panico* CD)
Well, I sweat all the time and am in dodgy situations all the time as well, so this is my number.
- 4. DIGITAL TONGUE "NO WAY YOU CAN SLEEP"**
(from *How To Kill the DJ (Part One)*)
This is the perfect electro hit. The Krikor remix is spot on and I like the Matt Johnson (from The The) vibe.
- 5. BIG NED "FINAL STEPS" (OSCARR)**
(from *How To Kill The DJ (Part Two)*)
"You were weak when you should have been strong/You were laughing when you should have been talking/Unable to use the powers that lurk with us all." Well, this one sounds just like me.

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ORIGIN PRESENTS...
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DRINKIN' THROUGH

Haunted House

Cologne's Ada produces minimal techno with eerie touches...and don't call her Blondie.

WORDS: PHILIP SHERBURNE PHOTO: RAINER HOLZ



Michi Dippel doesn't want to talk about Blondie. "Don't ask me!" she says, half squealing in exasperation. Her frustration might be understandable. While her debut album, recorded under her alias Ada, shares the name of the band fronted by a certain platinum-haired '80s diva, the comparisons pretty much end there, notwithstanding Dippel's own strawberry-ish coif.

"There's really not much to say about it," she continues, even though I haven't pressed her on the subject. "It's just a name I thought would fit, but it's got nothing to do with Debbie Harry. If you hear my music, it's not at all in an '80s style."

This is true. Dippel's record bears nary a trace of the new New Waveisms so prominent in American indie rock and dance music. And despite its home on Cologne's Areal, a label best known for undulating, post-acid brutality, it's also not the stock techno of the Cologne school. Lushly arranged, supersaturated with complex, contrapuntal melodies, and thrumming with organs and analog tones, it's almost gothic—though not necessarily in the high-camp, black-eyeliner-and-spiderweb-fishnets sense of the term.

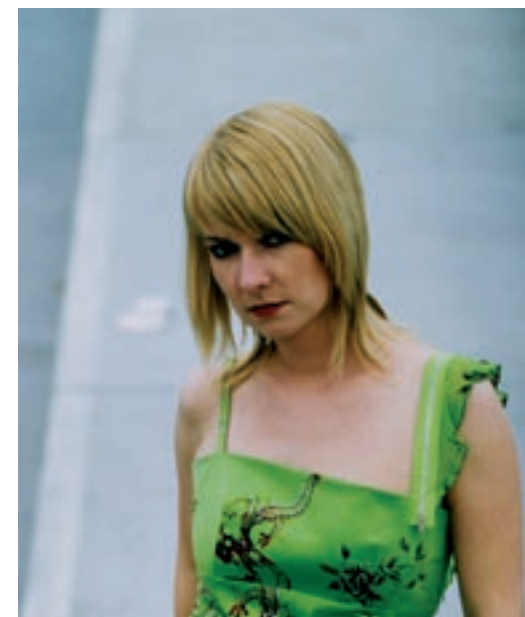
Still, darkness and mournfulness pervade all of Ada's work. On "Cool My Fire," for instance, Dippel coos like a more intelligible version of the Cocteau Twins' Liz Fraser while minor-key organ stabs take the place of old-school house music's pistoning pianos. Even on "Our Love Never Dies," one of the album's more minimal tracks, bleeps and grinding drum patterns brood implacably.

If you were to come up with a name for Ada's music, you might call it "haunted house"—and, as it turns out, there's a spectral source to Dippel's *nom de sampler*. Around the time that she was beginning her forays into solo music-making, Dippel was rummaging through boxes at a flea market when she came across a set of John Sinclair cassettes, audio books from a popular series of German horror fiction that had fascinated her as a child; she took them home for a long night of blood, guts, and nostalgia. "The music accompanying the book was really dark organ music, which is what inspired me for 'Blindhouse,'" she says, referring to her first single in which a murky organ figure creeps from room to room while floorboards creak and kickdrums patter like telltale hearts. The plot of the book revolved around a home for the blind—"blindhouse," in Dippel's translation—inhabited by sightless zombies; the warden of the home was named Ada. "It all just came together," she says.

It came together awfully quickly at that. Dippel completed her first single within about three months of her first encounter with electronic gear. Before becoming Ada, she had sung in several rock bands—influenced (perhaps predictably) by Radiohead and (much less predictably) Luscious Jackson—in her hometown outside Frankfurt. It was only in 2002, after the last band had dissolved and its members had scattered to other cities, that Dippel found herself in possession of a friend's Korg Electribe, an all-purpose drum machine and sequencer unit.

"In the beginning it was difficult," admits Dippel—working without a manual, and without even much grounding in dance music, it was hard to give form to her ideas. But a borrowed manual and a few weeks of fiddling later, she had built up a basic repertoire of patterns that she shared with Areal founder Michael Schwannen, an old friend. Stunned by the quality of the sketches, Schwannen—whose label distinguishes itself with a dark, improvisatory brand of acidic, abstract techno—pushed Dippel to see her songs through to completion. "Blindhouse," backed by the queasy "Luckycharm," was released in October 2002, and in little more than a year Dippel produced two more singles, each one helping to establish her as one of the most distinctive new voices in German techno.

But it was *Blondie*, released in October 2004, that raised Ada's profile above the trainspotters' gaze. Built on a foundation of shuffling beats,



gussied up in spine-tingling organ and acid tones, and featuring Dippel's own remarkably assured vocals, it even had *The New York Times*, that notoriously fussy Grey Lady, riding Ada's Technicolor jock. It didn't hurt, of course, that *Blondie's* penultimate track is a cover of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' "Maps," in which the New York rockers' poignant, heartstring-slashing epic is recast as a sprightly, almost ecstatic swirl of bright keys and chugging 4/4 beats.

"It's one of my all-time favorites," concedes Dippel of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' song. "We never asked them for permission," she admits. "I hope that if they hear it, they'll be okay with it. It would be great if I could figure out how to get in touch with them." When I remind her that a review of her record, specifically singling out "Maps" for praise, ran in the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' hometown newspaper, she pauses. "I hope that it's a good sign that I haven't heard anything from them yet."

Ada's *Blondie* is out now. www.areal-records.com



LADY MCs

Lady MCs put a new spin on UK garage.

WORDS: SARAH BENTLEY PHOTOS: LIZ JOHNSON-ARTUR AND DEBBIE BRAGG (GEMMA FOX) LETTERING: GREY (PVC)

For years, So Solid's Lisa Maffia and Ms. Dynamite were the lone female faces on the MC-driven side of UK garage, with Maffia dropping sparse cockney wordplay and Dynamite raining fire with breakneck patois. In their wake comes an army of girls who can spit syntax faster than a Tokyo bullet train, and whose alternative flow and lyrical content is shaking up the testosterone-fuelled scene. Making their name on the hostile rave and pirate radio circuit, these girls are executing seamless transitions from MC to artist—something many of the male spitters (barring exceptions like Dizzee Rascal, Wiley, and Taz) have been struggling to do for years. Meet Stush, Shystie, Gemma Fox, Fury, and Lady Sovereign—female mic controllers who are ripping up the script.

STUSH

How did you get into MCing? I'm a cross between a Jamaican DJ and a cockney MC. I write songs though, not just 16 bars. I started as a singjay on the reggae circuit in 2001 but I got more love on the garage scene. I did 150 PAs.

Breakthrough tune: "Dollar Sign" in 2002, produced by Sticky

What makes a good MC? Clever lyrics using metaphors. Talking about a subject or making a joke but putting it in a different way.

Do you clash? No, but I have a book of warring lyrics ready. Everyone does. Only 10% of MCs really freestyle, everyone else just draws from clashing lyrics they've put aside.

Have you ever been pressured to sing? My label signed me as a DJ so they never pressured me to sing.

What's the difference between an MC and an artist? MCs have lyrics but artists have lyrics, charisma, and stage characters. You've got to have character to progress from MC to artist. I have this high-pitched squeak I use to entertain the crowd. People are surprised when I come on with the same fire as the boys. They're thinking, "What's she gonna do, lift up her skirt?" Then I give it to them. As an artist on stage, it's every man for themselves.

Stush will release her debut album early 2005 on Island.



STUSH





SHYSTIE

SHYSTIE

How did you get into MCing? I hung out with boys who were into MCing. They encouraged me to try it and once I did I was bitten by the bug.

Breakthrough tune: A reply to Dizzee Rascal's "I Luv U." Back then there were no girls on the scene, so people were feeling the alternative take. As a girl you can't come with alright lyrics; you have to smash it to get respect.

What makes a good MC? Confidence and originality.

Do you clash? Not really, but I can. I just done a series of 02 parties where people text words to my phone and I had to spit lyrics using them. People sent crazy things. That was harder than a clash.

Were you ever pressured to sing? Some labels I went to before I signed my deal wanted to push me that way. I come from the grime scene so to sing would make no sense. No one will pressure me to be something I ain't. That's why I took a year to choose a label.

What's the difference between an MC and an artist? An MC can spit live over beats and hype up crowds at raves. I'm still an MC but I'm also an artist. I have an image, a sound, a style. I'm a whole package—that's what you need to be an artist, tight flow isn't enough.

Diamond In The Dirt is out now on Polydor. www.shystie.com



GEMMA FOX

GEMMA FOX

How did you get into MCing? I was writing songs from age 14 but I found it easier to get on the mic in clubs and spit as an MC.

Breakthrough tune: "So Messy," remixed by Paleface in 2002.

What makes a good MC? Hype, energy, fresh style, and party vibes. Your delivery is different when you MC rather than rap—you spit with more aggression and you've got to be able to freestyle for hours.

Do you clash? Only if it's a girls versus boys event. You make light-hearted comments about the opposite sex but it's about having a laugh rather than an all-out battle. When there's a lot of MCs on stage it can be hard getting the mic—people can try and sabotage your opportunity.

Have you ever been pressured to sing? I am a singer. I started out MCing as that was easier to get into. Singing is my stronger point and it's what I'm concentrating on now.

What's the difference between an MC and an artist? Artists do PAs of their songs and MCs have to hype a rave for hours on end. Artists have personality and give you lyrics that are different rather than the standard A, B, C. Being an MC is the ultimate artist training.

Gemma Fox's debut album, *Messy*, is out in the UK on Universal/Polygram. Look out for mixtapes *My Boys* (released in the UK) and *X-Files* (in the US). www.gemmafox.com



FURY

How did you get into MCing? My brother was a DJ so I started spitting on his set up at home. I did competitions at raves like Young Man Standing and eventually they billed me on the flyer. East Connection brought me into their crew so I rolled with them for a while doing sessions on De Ja Vu, [a London pirate station that pioneered the grime sound], but now I'm solo.

Breakthrough tune: "Merk Dem," an underground release.

What makes a good MC? Talent, personality, and persistence. As a girl it's hard to get accepted. Girls don't MC, they cook—you get me? So you have to bring something strong to the table that's as good as, or better than, the best male spitters. When I was starting out and no one knew me I had to grab the mic out the boys' hands. Soon as you have a rep, everyone's on you.

Do you clash? I did last year with Cutie, Godfather's sister. I don't like it. It ain't positive and it don't make you any money. Two people that have never met flinging insults at each other...it's stupid.

Have you ever been pressured to sing? No, but I've not dealt with the major labels yet so maybe that's to come. I'm staying away from them right now as in the early stages of your career they can be damaging.

What's the difference between an MC and an artist? Artists can't just hype up a rave, you have to be able to do stage shows and some MCs shake when it comes to that.

Fury's mixtape *Hell Hath No Fury* is out now on The Defenders. Catch Fury hosting the Aftershock radio show with Terradanger every other Friday on www.bbc.co.uk/1extra, 2 a.m.-6 a.m. UK time.



LADY SOVEREIGN

How did you get into MCing? I started writing when I was 15. I'd do live call-ins on pirates and spit down the phone. I started doing PAs and people were surprised to see a tiny white girl spitting how I spit. It took me a long time to find this voice but once I had it I knew it would blow.

Breakthrough tune: "The Battle" in 2003. It was a clash between boys and girls.

What makes a good MC? Personality. I'm cheeky and no one really comes like that. You got to have original lyrics and be able to freestyle over any kind of beat, especially if you're clashing. The DJ could drop anything so you've got to be prepared, but you can't use pre-written lyrics against someone you've never met.

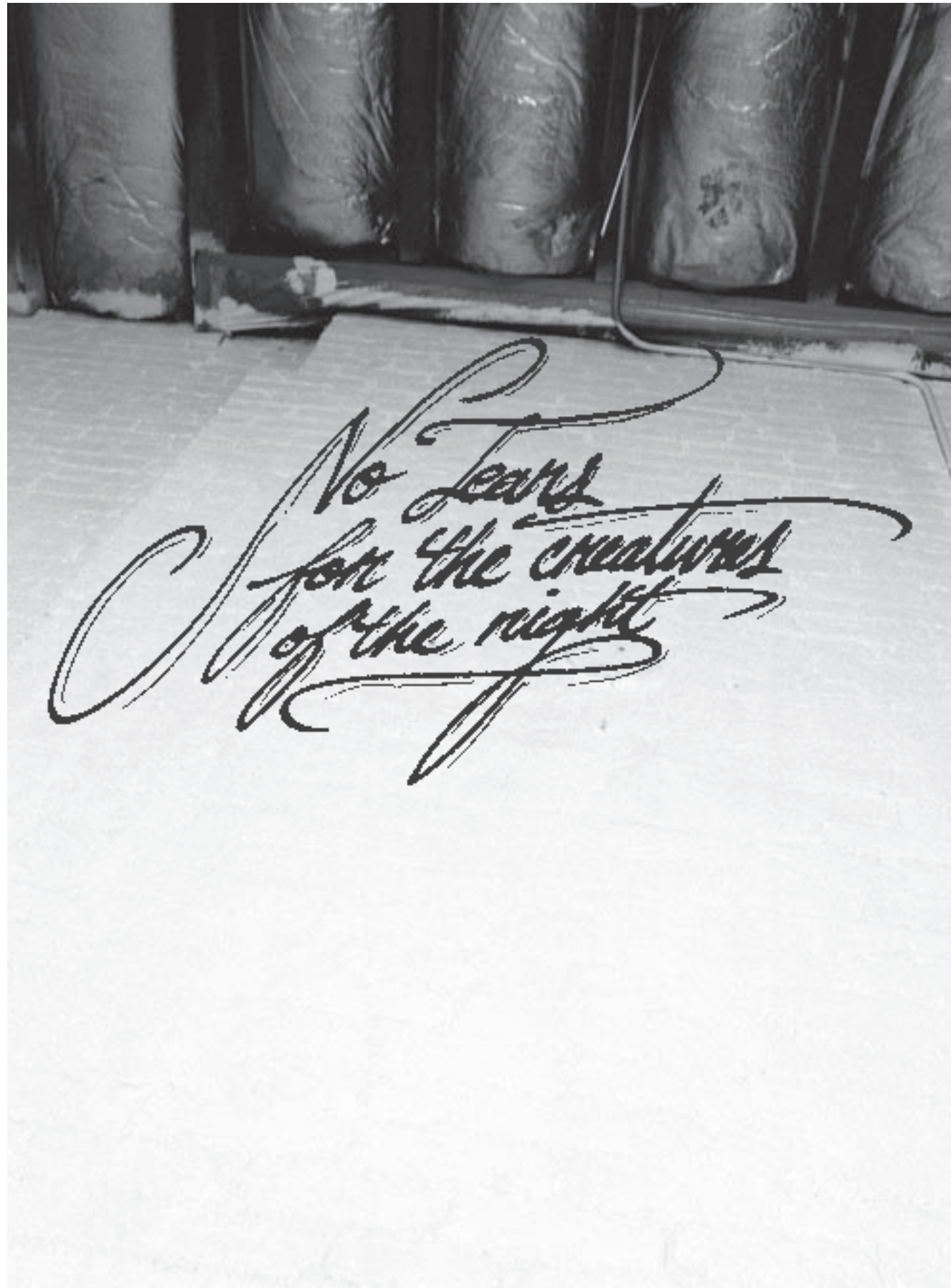
Do you clash? No, but I know there's people out there that want to clash me and I'm ready for them.

Have you ever been pressured to sing? That's not my talent. I've told everyone I can't sing.

What's the difference between an MC and an artist? Nothing really, except one is more developed. I'm an MC but I'm also an artist.

Lady Sovereign's mixtape will be out early 2005 on Universal/Island. www.ladysovereign.com

New to UK garage and grime? Learn more at www.rinsefm.com, www.bbc.com/1extra/garage, and www.rudemag.com.









NO TEARS FOR THE CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

Page 75

On Leah: Alice Ritter dress, Agatha jewelry, Stephane Kelien shoes

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On Leah: Daryl K jacket, Jeremy Scott pants, Rockers NYC shirt, Adidas shoes

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On Lindsey: Daryl K top, Alice Ritter pants, Model's own boots

On Leah: Daryl K dress, Adidas sweatshirt, Agatha jewelry, Model's own boots

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On Lindsey: Alice Ritter jumpsuit

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On Lindsey: Easel striped shirt, Jeremy Scott shirt, Alice Ritter skirt, Stetson hat, Stephane Kelien shoes

On Jesse: Zaldy jacket, Jeremy Scott shorts and belt, Stephane Kelien shoes, Agatha jewelry

PHOTO SHOOT

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Creative Director
CHRISTOPHER GLANCY

Motion Graphics
DAVID FOOTE

Videography
CRYSTAL MOSELLE
DAVID FOOTE
LAUREN GHUZZI
CHRISTOPHER GLANCY

MUSIC THAT MATTERS! SPRING BREAK 2005



Evil Nine
You Can Be Special Too



Michael Mayer
Touch



LCD Soundsystem
lcd soundsystem



Aesop Rock
fast cars, danger, fire and knives



Beenie Man
Kingston to King of the Dancehall



Reggae Pulse 5
Protest Songs



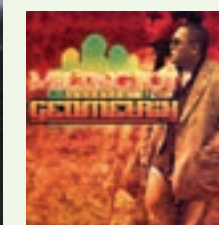
▲ Geometrix

ALBUM REVIEWS 03.05

DJ JESTER
TABLE FOR ONE
Fever Pitch/US/CD

GEOMETRIX
MELTING POT
Trooperz/US/CD

DJ GOLDENHYLD
EAR INFECTIONS
Zebra Music/US/CD



TURNING THE TABLES ON TURNTABLISM

The concept of a well-planned hip-hop album has gone the way of uncleaned James Brown samples; a typical full-length these days contains two or three singles and a ton of filler. Meanwhile, the mixtape game has exploded, spawning all kinds of styles—from completely DJ-and-turntable-free compilations to painstakingly crafted pieces of work that display a DJ's skills rather than his industry connections. In many respects, mixtapes have become what albums used to be: cohesive and emotional. And they're at their best when DJs take turntablist skills and apply them to a big picture. It's not just about scratch wankery these days—these three releases from acclaimed DJs showcase turntablism's evolution.

DJ Jester's *Table for One* is the most traditionally album-like of this trio of releases. He describes it as the soundtrack to conversations he had with his friends about their relationship breakups, immediately calling to mind the sad, "I just broke up with my boy/girlfriend" music mixes most of us have made at some point in our lives. Though all the selections on this disc are original creations by Jester and his musician pal Quad Rod, the format is mixtape to the core, especially as Jester uses a traditional technique—voicemail messages as transitions between songs—to keep things flowing. The music itself is quite sparse, morose, and even schmaltzy at times, with lots of synths and sullen-sounding guitars sounding off while Jester does understated drum and vocal scratching in the background. The end result is a CD version of all the "John Cusack is sad" parts of *Say Anything*.

Speaking of 1980s references, Geometrix's *Melting Pot*—of this group, easily the one that sounds the most like a classic DJ mixtape—is chock full of 1980s songs. At points, it sounds like a throw-

back to junior high or high school dances. That may or may not appeal to you, but Geometrix's turntable skills are appealing throughout and his impeccable scratchwork and well-tuned ear for blending sounds stands out. This isn't a quantum leap forward for DJing, nor is it new stylistic or thematic ground, but it is a solid listening experience that needs to be taken in at once to appreciate the bigger picture it paints.

DJ Goldenhyld's excellent *Ear Infections*, meanwhile, treads the middle ground between the other two. It's not quite a traditional album, but it's not just a mixtape either. There are few instances where Goldenhyld stands back and lets a record play. The rest of the time, he's making honest-to-god songs out of beats, samples, and scratches. This ain't GC merely playing records, nor is it him using records to make beats for vocalists, nor is it a super scratch-happy finger workout masquerading as songs. It's his own musical expression—a turntablist's attempt to engage in the true compositional aspects of making music. As such, it's not just a great listening experience, but a positive step in the continuing evolution of DJing. *Pete Babb*

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Definitive Jux/US/CD

The lyrical master's new seven-song EP is full of biting political, social, and media criticism. Aside from one contribution from Rob Sonic, Blockhead and Aesop split production duties, laying down hard-hitting beats and dark synth melodies. The hyper-fast "Rickety Rackety" features Aesop's rapid-fire vocals and trade-offs with El-P and Camu Tao. On "Holy Smoke," Aesop insists that he's not an asshole while ranting about religion over eerie marimba and pounding drums. On the down side, despite the moans of a woman who's apparently being fucked, the final track is musically anticlimactic. *Amber Drea*

AFRICAN AUDIO RESEARCH PROGRAM
VOL.1
Nylon/US/CD

The house party's at the point where the irony and posturing mellow into something softer, murmuring, and inexplicably more sincere. Flirts brush hands to a saxophone's warm come-ons. A swirl of incense rises in a dark corner, its lazy upward spiral followed by intent eyes. Someone's broken out the hand drums amidst the smokers and lingerers and that girl—there's always at least one—dances, drink dangled above her head, with her hips swiveling slowly, her eyes closed. Jaymz Nylon's the host of it all with this generous mix of lilting afro-rhythms, gentle broken beats, and a warm tamarind kick. *Selena Hsu*

AGF/DELAY EXPLODE
AGF Produktion/GER/CD

"Her secrets/Make me feel/For some reason/Like a circus elephant/Trying to balance on a ball," hisses Antye Greie-Fuchs. She could be describing herself in the third person, as *Explode* attests. This Berliner continues to brush her whispered memoirs and digital dub with paints that disintegrate in the wind—now with Vladislav Delay onboard. His insecure rhythms stagger and thud at a pace that constantly looks up to a parent for direction. AGF's haunted impressions of street life can either entice or be dismissed as postmodernist drivel. However, there are hints of sunshine here: the gutter-steam fantasia of "Recorded" and the flooded-city dub of "Useless." *Cameron Macdonald*

A GUY CALLED GERALD
TO ALL THINGS WHAT THEY NEED
!K7/US/CD

Gerald could probably make a great d&b album in his sleep. This is not that album—it's far more interesting. Always a boundary-pusher, Gerald ditches defined genres, going for a sound that feels alternately lush and sparse, atmospheric and moody. "Millennium Sanhedrin" features spoken word from Ursula Rucker, followed by the evocative (and aptly named) "Call for Prayer." "Tajeen" pairs tabla and synths, and "Strangest Changes" reunites Gerald with Finley Quay (who showed up on Gerald's "Finley's Rainbow" years ago). All hard to classify, but the album doesn't need labels to succeed. *Luciana Lopez*

BIRD SHOW GREEN INFERNO
Kranky/US/CD

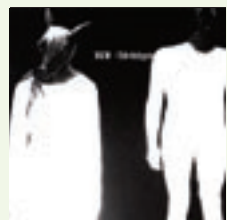
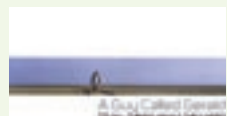
Bird Show is led by Ben Vida of Town & Country, a Chicago post-folk combo who play Americanazak, wholesome sonic celery NPR often uses for segment segues. *Green Inferno* is vastly more interesting. Vida has absorbed musics from Asia and Africa and filtered them into intense, mesmerizing compositions. "All Afternoon Part #1" immediately immerses you in an otherworldly, tropical miasma of mbira and cornet, acting as a clarion call for arcane primitive rites. Like much of *Inferno*, it falls somewhere among Don Cherry's hypnotic world-jazz excursions, Terry Riley's soulful organ tones, and Jon Hassell's malarial ambience. Elsewhere, Vida slips in some opiated balladry among the ponderin'-the-imponderable dronescapes. *Dave Segal*

BOOM BIP BLUE EYED IN THE RED ROOM
Lex/UK/CD

Although he comes to the electronic music production game from the hip-hop DJ world, the second LP from Cincinnati's Brian Hollon has more "bip" than "boom" going on. Layered with organic instrumentation, his glitchy instrumentals are at various times evocative of Prefuse 73, Four Tet, and Chicago post-rock. But what's distinctive about *Blue Eyed In The Red Room* is just how unexpectedly accessible it sounds; each track appears somewhat conducive to mass consumption. "The Move" almost sounds like Robert Smith should be singing over it; Super Furry Animals vocalist Gruff Rhys stops by on "Dos and Don'ts" to help create some multi-layered Brian Wilson-esque harmonies. *Blue Eyed's* unexpected moments are its best ones. *Jesse Server*

GUILLERMO E. BROWN BLACK DREAMS 1.0
Melanine Harmonique/US/CD

Inventive drummer Brown's worked with Blue Series jazz stalwarts David S. Ware Quartet and Matthew Shipp, and issued that series' strangest disc, *Soul At The Hands Of The Machine*. As odd as that album is, however, it sounds like straight-ahead jazz compared to *Black Dreams 1.0*. Recorded by Brown on Max/MSP with assistance from Matt Ostrowski, *Black Dreams* is polyglot experimentation run riot, an unfathomable morass of impossible textures and baffling rhythms. And it rules. Brown combines Herbie Hancock's *Sextant*-era electronic exploration with Eardrum's fourth-world textural wizardry. The result is a disorienting soundtrack for an unimaginable film. This stuff is very potent. *Dave Segal*



MARA CARLYLE THE LOVELY
Accidental/UK/CD

Known for her work with Dani Siciliano, Plaid, and Matthew Herbert, Carlyle is finally out on her own with this powerfully delicate and captivating album. Her vocals soar effortlessly into registers that would make Liz Fraser blush. Lyrically the songs are purposeful, powerful yet disarmingly simple. The album is co-produced by the men of Plaid, who mix slight beats with an array of instrumentation including piano, double bass, ukelele, saw, and beautiful string arrangements. Carlyle's voice is that of the human spirit. Truly magnificent. *Gik*

CASBAH 73 MOODS AND GROOVES
Hi-Top/SPA/CD

An acid jazz resurgence is hardly an anticipated revival movement. But as '80s nostalgia fades, and the '90s becomes the next subject of cultural fascination, anything is possible. And while Casbah 73—the solo effort of musician Oliver Stewart—hints at the rare grooves 'n' Rhodes-saturated sound, he thankfully steers clear of Jamiroquai territory. Stewart wields electric bass, guitar, and keyboards fluidly, adding spoken word snippets, crowd noise, and percussion samples to tracks that range from mirror-ball jazz ("Still Going On") to shuffling, housey workouts ("Think It Over"). This is the sound of Malaga sunshine with nods to the e-z lounge vibes of artists like Nicola Conte and Nuspirit Helsinki. It's not acid jazz, but Casbah 73 is a funky hybrid of the electronic and the organic for a trippy new generation. *Tomas*

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS PUSH THE BUTTON
Freestyle Dust-Virgin/UK/CD

The fifth album from Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons does what a Chemical Brothers album should. It makes loud, unobtrusive noises through powerful beats, riffs, and obligatory siren noises. The first single, "Galvanize," is a case in point. Featuring Q-Tip, it will no doubt endear itself to most of their fans, yet, for all its raucous energy, it still feels somewhat uninspired. However this is still an album in need of your attention. "Hold Tight London" is a dream using Anna Lynne's voice to great effect. Yet the best is saved for last. "Surface To Air" is one of their finest recordings to date, coming over like an electronic ode to Bowie's "Heroes." Fun, loud, and sometimes, very good. *Rob Wood*

THE CONNECTION MACHINE PAINLESS
Downlow/US/CD

Not content with releasing the best contemporary "Detroit" techno, Dutch artists are now unleashing work from their archives that demonstrates that they've always had a flair for electronic music at its most emotive and soulful. 154 initiated the trend, dropping the *Strike* LP—produced during Dutch techno's early '90s first wave—at the tail-end of 2004. *Painless*, the creation of duo Jeroen Brandjes and Natasja Hagemeier, was put together during the same period for release on Planet E, but the record never hit the racks. Thankfully, Texan imprint Downlow has ensured that it finally will—great news for all concerned. *Dave Stenton*

DACM STEREOTYPIC
Asphodel/US/CD

DACM, a collaboration between Mego heavyweights Peter Rehberg and vocalist Tujiko Noriko, had a lot of promise in concept, but the reality is a very one-sided exploration, with only two (although notably gorgeous) contributions from Ms. Noriko. The remaining nine tracks from Rehberg (alias Pita) rumble with sonic depth, some of a darker shade, others more predictable in their development and character. The high note of *Stereotypic* is "Birthday," an amazingly deep 12-minute aural meditation. The track is a lot like Rehberg's masterpiece on Ash International's *Mesmer* compilation, which is currently celebrating its 10-year anniversary. Apparently, Pita's ambient gets better with age. *J. David Marston*

DIE MONITR BATSS GIRLS OF WAR
Troubleman Unlimited/US/CD

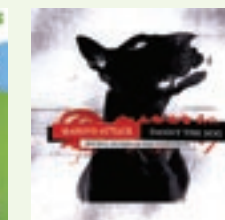
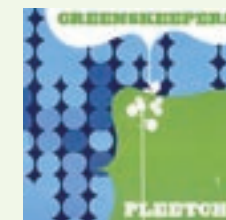
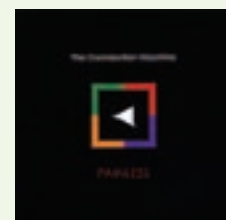
For a band whose first 7" predicted a big No Wave mess, Die Monitr Batss has pulled off an impressive LP. Featuring members of Portland's Sleet Mute Mute and The Gossip's Brace Paine, Die Monitr Batss' droning chug of bass and reverb is skillfully split with trip-tempo drums, angular stabs of frenzied guitar, and the wail of discordant sax. The only rollover from Paine's work in The Gossip is his skill in turning stripped down riffs into measures of punk composition and that's what holds these tracks together. *Girls of War* is a synthesis of Northwest noise and a solid debut. *Carla Costa*



THOMAS FEHLMANN

THOMAS FEHLMANN LOWFLOW Plug Research/US/CD

A classic Berliner (not a jelly doughnut), Thomas Fehlmann was The Orb's Ronnie Wood when they needed a perfect fit. An all-around player, he provided metro sophistication to their ambient house and sprockets to their techno. *Lowflow* proves Fehlmann is just as interested in experimentation and even more capable of making dance tracks that don't insult our, uh, *intelligence*. There's the minimal house of "Andrea Is Delighted," the Ghostly glitch (Dabrye guests) of "Springer," and "Feat," the post-impact side of Air's "Surfing On A Rocket," only thrice as funky and spooky enough for John Carpenter whenever he gets around to scoring *Halloween On Mars*. *Daniel Siwek*



DUBTRIBE SOUND SYSTEM BAGGAGE
Imperial Dub/US/CD

Since 1991, after booting their DJ, SF deep housers Dubtribe Sound System (husband Sunshine/wife Moonbeam Jones) mixed up house and dub—chilled, not stirred. A proudly viable live band, DSS also pumped out a plethora of dance-floor luv'n' twelvers and now have *Baggage*. No samplers were harmed during the recording—it's hyperreal in both instrumentation and topic. Titles "Shakertrance," "Raggatronique," "The Rhythm In Your Mind," "Lo Disco," and "Do It Now" appear fluffy and the tracks do bounce, but a deeper dig into the bag o' tunes reveals concern for today's house music. *Baggage* warns us to keep up with the Joneses. *Stacy Meyn*

JEREMY ELLIS LOTUS BLOOMS
Ubiquity/US/CD

For his second opus, *Lotus Bloom*, singer/songwriter Jeremy Ellis mines a number of disparate genres to hone his sound—an amalgamation of nu-jazz, nu-soul, and Latin vibes as well as drawing on a raw musical sensibility derived from growing up in Detroit. The album possesses a songwriting virtuosity that's lacking in many mainstream soul albums; Ellis takes numerous creative risks, but is careful not to

alienate the listener. As a result, *Lotus Blooms* isn't the self-indulgent music fest you'd expect from the title. Instead, Ellis has released an album that is engaging, giving us some meat to sink our teeth into. *June Joseph*

LIZZ FIELDS BY DAY BY NIGHT
ABB/US/CD

Philadelphia's Lizz Fields has generated much buzz since stepping into the spotlight. Some may compare her to Jill Scott and they wouldn't be too far off, but Fields begs to be listened to in her own right. Musically, *By Day By Night* is contemporary jazz with a generous helping of hip-hop and soul. However, Fields' vocals and lyrics are the focal point here. With her silky, emotive voice, she sings of love gained, lost, and the maddening bits in between. She easily sucks you in with her playfulness, then blows you away emotionally. As debuts go, Ms. Fields' release will easily stand up to years of scrutiny. *June Joseph*

SAGE FRANCIS A HEALTHY DISTRUST
Epitaph/US/CD

Sometimes, I swear to god, Sage's skin is made out of pure chainmail. He's damn pissed and armored up—yet he can still peer out, all squinty



BERES HAMMOND

BERES HAMMOND LOVE HAS NO BOUNDARIES VP/US/CD

Bloodclaat! Where's my woman? Beres's reggae soulful love songs make you want to hug your girl a little tighter. Even the uptempo tunes big up the ladies, like "Thanks Fe Mi Pride and Joy" with ace DJ Buju Banton, who reminds us "*Beres Hammond [is] the girls them pink salmon.*" It's the usual stuff here on the 20th album from one of the most respected and consistent voices in lover's rock—but if Beres is sweetest when championing romantic love, he's strongest when recalling days when dancehall was strictly about good times. "Good Old Dancehall Vibes," featuring veteran toaster Big Youth, is a boom shot. Another feel-good track is the vibrant "Let The Good Times Roll" with singjay Natural Black, who *sits down 'pon the riddim like a tire 'pon a rim*. Although no song on *Love* is as good as Beres's '90s anthems "Step Aside" or "Resistance," true fans won't be disappointed. *Araya Crosskill*

and suspicious, clanking a rusty ruckus with his twisted rhymes. With his second official release, the malcontent is back in the yard, kicking at pavement with the frustration grinding off the soles of his shoes, cutting a bombastic step with scornful rips of guitar. *A Healthy Distrust* doesn't stay quiet for long before the aggression rattles out from clenched fists. *Selena Hsu*

LAURENT GARNIER
THE CLOUD MAKING MACHINE
F Com-PIAS/FRA/CD

Unlike his most successful album to date, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, *The Cloud Making Machine* is not a record to dance to. With its bombastic artwork it sets itself up as a concept album, perhaps a soundtrack to an imaginary film. Consequentially, dark and brooding (and supposedly cinematic) electronic blues pieces lie at the heart of Garnier's new long-player. Collaborations occur with Norway's jazz pianist Bugge Wesseltoft and Scan X, all the right noises are made, and Garnier's eclectic taste and love for Detroit are all present and accounted for. Unfortunately, what's lacking are dynamic songwriting ideas on the scale of his tour de force *The Man With The Red Face*. *Rob Wood*

GIORGIO FROM HERE TO ETERNITY
Hip-O Select/US/CD

Giorgio Moroder would never say he invented electronic sequencing, but Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream weren't nearly as interested in testing it out in the dance clubs, and they didn't make four to the floor a way of life. His "I Feel Love" sequence (dunga, dunga, dunga, dunga) for Donna Summer was patent-worthy, and "The Chase" has been the centerpiece of countless sets, but *From Here To Eternity* (also Casablanca, 1977) was Giorgio's record. The father of Eurodisco, hi-energy, and Italo designed this album not only for the floor or the mattress, but for your headphones and your car. From the vocoders to the completely electronic percussion, this record is the original Dirty Vegas commercial over two decades ahead of its time. *Daniel Siwek*

GREENSKEEPERS PLEETCH
Om/US/CD

Yes, that was Tattoo from Fantasy Island in Greenskeepers' video for "Filipino Phil," a guitar-laden track about a midget who likes to party. But for fans who have been waiting for Greenskeepers' second full-length, the group's ability to laugh at themselves is no surprise. Just take the already-popular "Lotion" on this album, told from the point of view of *Silence of the Lambs'* Buffalo Bill (and including the so creepy line "it rubs the lotion on its skin..."). Um, okay. In between the comedic turns though, the album includes electronic-leaning rock(ish) and welcoming Chicago-inflected house, a mix of funk, bass, synths, and groove. *Luciana Lopez*

HARMONIC 33
MUSIC FOR FILM, TELEVISION AND RADIO, VOL. 1
Warp/UK/CD

Harmonic 33 oddly piques nostalgia for the mid-'90s retro revival of '60s "exotica." On this ode to broadcast sound libraries, hip-hop producers Mark Pritchard and Dave Brinkworth revamp the atomic age clichés that sold romance, spectacular death, and Martian existence in movies, sitcoms, and radio serials. However, they eschew the sampler in favor of concocting everything from scratch. Their devotion is amazing—each melodramatic harp-sichord melody and Moog doodling is indistinguishable from the LPs that clutter Goodwill

thrift shops. Yet the album jumps between funeral wakes and UFO dogfights so much that your guests will mistakenly blame the martinis for their upset stomachs. *Cameron Macdonald*

I.T. (INFINITO & THAIONE)
LOW INCOME HOUSING
Domination/US/CD

Hailing from Chicago's Southside, Infinito and Thaione could very well be the next Windy City warriors to break through into the national consciousness. Though they've put out other projects individually, *Low Income Housing* is their debut as a group, highlighting their skills on the mic (mostly Infinito) and with the beats (mostly Thaione). Soulful, loop-driven production drives rhymes that are smart without being preachy, extolling the virtues of self-empowerment and real hip-hop. "Casual Liberation," "You Are Not It," and the horn and clap-driven "My Life Creation #63" are stand-outs, but the whole LP is sharp. Keep an eye on these cats. *Brolin Winning*

JOHANN JOHANNSSON
VIRDULEGU FORSETAR
Touch/UK/CD

Johann's second album for Touch comes on the heels of his peerless new classical masterpiece, *Englaborn*, so certainly the expectations are immense. Those looking to see this effort continue the soaring melancholy of the first release will no doubt be satisfied, but by a thoroughly different approach. The album is broken into four long pieces that, in essence, work off the same horn/organ arrangement; they sublimely and powerfully affect the listener with the delicate attention to pacing, spacing, and weight. These arrangements are markedly different than *Englaborn's* shorter, more straight forward compositions, but the two albums are very similar in their use of modulated and delicate repetition. Without fail another brilliant release for Touch, and Iceland's most recent—and deserving—international star. *J. David Marston*

JONSON CHIPLANDSCHAFTEN
Mikrolux/GER/CD

As the all-things-not-quite-electro arm of the Elektrolux label, Mikrolux welcomes yet another new talent to the roster, delivering 15 cuts of Amiga 1200-generated continuum. One would have to cite Boards of Canada and Autechre as likely influences here, as the bulk of *Chiplandschaften* pulls on our heartstrings with lush aquarium chording, endlessly trailing reverb, and textbook DSP. Logical construction, though competently orchestrated, tends to lead each chapter in a predictable and, at times, soundtrack-like direction despite the well-intended IDM beat robotics. A fuel-efficient ride through some familiar but not-so-scenic territory. *Doug Morton*

ELMORE JUDD ANGEL SOUND
Above The Clouds/UK/CD

Elmore Judd—otherwise known as UK producer Jesse Hackett—steps up to the plate currently occupied by the likes of Slum Village, PPP, and SA-RA, possessing a similar ability to balance sleazy, grimy P-funk, spiky hip-hop rhythms, and silken smooth soul. That said, this is no mere imitation of his sonic US cousins—there is something indefinably British about this, with echoes of The Specials, Roots Manuva, and New Flesh in its often spooky urban skank. Perhaps there is a little too much reliance on a minimalist electro sound palette, but there's plenty of potential here to get excited about. *Steve Nickolls*

KADET THIN AIR
Current/US/CD

Kadet Kuhne is part of a growing mob convincingly arguing that intriguing digital art and Southern California are not antithetical. An installation and video artist as well as a musician, Kadet's *Thin Air* was entirely created with Sensorium, an interactive software environment, but the process is really only as important as the result. The result is a strange and enveloping pocket of barely-there music: synthetic scrapes, soothing plinks, the sounds of live patch cords plugging in. Yet Kadet's work somehow looms larger than the sum of its soundwaves, grasping for a larger, more impressively cinematic headspace. *Rob Geary*

KOUSHIK BE WITH
Stones Throw/US/CD

Koushik hasn't exactly stormed the scene as much as he's waded in, first with his brilliant 7" for Kieran "Four Tet" Hebden's Text imprint two years ago (some of which is included here) and then as guest vocalist for Manitoba's *Up In Flames* record. And that chronology—from DJ Premier-gone-postrock to hazy, Sound Library-sampled pop—says something about the Canadian's trajectory. While it's true that many have tried and will try to do what Koushik has done—please don't call it psych-hop, thanks—few will succeed. Whether it's slept on or not, *Be With* is a masterpiece of subtlety and restraint. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

MIKE LADD NEGROPHILIA
Thirsty Ear/US/CD

Instead of cramping jazz into hip-hop's beats, Ladd lets hip-hop spill out in a manner that would make Ornette Coleman and other pursuers of freedom proud. Name dropping Duchamp and Malinowski, he isn't trying to be clever, just not interested in dumbing down. A bevy of instrumental tracks allow the talented live band to work their chops. On "Back at Ya," a duck-walking oboe riff is backed by what sounds like Tony Allen in a garage punk band: ominous, sad, sarcastic, and smart. Most of these tracks aren't exactly crowd pleasers, instead Ladd has carved out an unusual and consistent album. *Ben Bush*

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM
DFA/US/CD

Since 2002, LCD producer James Murphy has spurred bedheaded arm-folders worldwide to break sweats to his raw, relentless, and meta-ironic disco-funk singles. But the anticipated debut album ain't the big bang expected from this electrifyin' mofo. It starts promisingly with "Daft Punk Is Playing At My House," clap-happy, stripped-down funk rock powered by a sassy bassline and falsetto "ooh yeah"s like ESG covering B-52s. But a few shockingly conventional songs echoing classic rock icons sap the disc's energy. LCD is best when intensifying The Fall's repetitious churn and drone or ramming amyl nitrate up funk's nose. Still, this is the air cowbell album of the decade... *Dave Segal*

ELIOT LIPP
Eastern Developments/US/CD

Coming from Prefuse 73's label, this kid's scrappy instrumental hip-hop is just what you'd expect: loose, breathable funk fabric. Lipp weaves some fine textures, especially with the gorgeous metallic horn threading through "Gordo," a satisfying nodder that throbs from the bassline up, and holy dusty piano! What a sweetly dark little bridge. "Like No Tomorrow" is all soft red lights and shadows, a lovely little piece of work, but like in all his songs, Lipp seemingly cuts along a straight dotted line, as if according to a prefab pattern. He's mastered the feel; now how about some shape? *Selena Hsu*

L PIERRE TOUCHPOOL
Melodic/JK/CD

Aidan Moffat, also one half of Arab Strap, arrives at his second solo album *Touchpool*. The field that L Pierre moves in—vaguely described as folktronica or



SHARON JONES & THE DAP KINGS

SHARON JONES & THE DAP KINGS NATURALLY Daptone/US/CD

Brassy singer Sharon Jones and her Dap Kings have the recipe for funk just right: powerful vocals that spin an often hilarious story, a crisp rhythm section, and plenty of nimble, chicken scratch guitar that sometimes strays into Afrobeat territory. No surprise there, since the Dap Kings includes members of Antibalas Afrobeat Orchestra, and the album's organic, cohesive groove reflects the family feel of a band that is constantly touring. Like a plate full of fried chicken, grits, and collard greens, *Naturally* makes for a full meal from the easy lode of "Stranded," with its tale of a smooth-talker worming his way back into his lady's bed, to the energetic strut of "My Man Is a Mean Man," to a rubbing and grinding version of "This Land is Your Land." Line up for your belly full of funk. *Peter Nicholson*

even electro-acoustic—is increasingly crowded; as such, the differences between good and bad become ever finer and more difficult to put your finger on. Moffat's mixing of folk, near classical string arrangements, and even a touch of the Buena Vista in some places stands above, but it's his instinct for ambience and an ambivalence of mood—both naive and faintly menacing—that makes this a delight. *Steve Nickolls*

MR. SPADE REAL TALK
West Coast Mafia/US/CD

This is *not* a headphones album. It is not a notice that there's a new lyrical wunderkind in town. So what is it? Some West Coast bumpage for slummin' in a lowered car filled with enough subwoofers to handle the overpowering low-end. Over 20 tracks there's no new ground broken, but there's plenty of window-rattling bass—wide-open 808s and the kind of synth bass tones that are dominating West Coast hip-hop. If you've had your head in the clouds of late, it's time for you to come back down to the turf and enjoy some good old-fashioned big-time bumps. Mr. Spade could be just what the doctor ordered. *Pete Babb*

MUM'S THE WORD CONSTANT EVOLUTION
Grey Label/US/CD

Todd Mumford got into music production as a college radio DJ at UC Santa Barbara, and he's been studying both mainstream and the underground ever since. *Constant Evolution* is a straightforward amalgam of hip-hop and electronica spruced up with an occasional reggae-inflected track or lounge sample. LA's underground rises up to contribute guest vocals; Senim Silla raps about big brother and Myka 9 offers tangled rhymes about art, life, and accused *Baretta* star Robert Blake. Brother Ali's deep bellow makes "Traacherous" the stand-out track. Mum's a competent producer but has yet to find his own sound. *Ben Bush*

MYLO DESTROY ROCK & ROLL
Breastfed/SCOT/CD

Indie music soars while the mainstream sours, as this gem from Scotland proves. Myles McInnes' time spent in Europe and the US stirred the ingredients in head, and out poured this beautiful album. From the languid "Sunworshipper," McInnes gears up and then unleashes the punchy "Drop the Pressure." Rawness and romance are the parameters of his oscillation; the result is the ascendant passion of tracks like "In My Arms," and "Destroy Rock & Roll," which evokes the late '80s with liberal doses of acid. *Chris Orr*

MYSTERYMEN
EVERYTHING BUT AN ANSWER
Disko B/GER/CD

It's not every day that you hear a group that entrusts their vocals to an Atari computer. This northern UK coalition shapes their tracks from robotic vocals and dubby techno, bathed in the retro sound of analog synthesizers. It might be hard to tell whether you're listening to electroclash (old news) or pre-Erasure synth rock (still cool), but it's fun all the same. The first cut, "Don't Look Back," is the best, a vocodered take on an acapella track with an uplifting melody and hopeful yet meaningless lyrics that scream vintage '80s. *Janet Tzou*

ONE BE LO S.O.N.O.G.R.A.M.
Fat Beats/US/CD

The few people who've heard Binary Star's *Masters of the Universe* LP should already recognize the artist formerly known as OneManArmy as a highly underrated and talented lyricist, but *S.O.N.O.G.R.A.M.* does little to develop the Pontiac, MI native's rep as an MC. While One's rhymes often lack the spark to make them stand out from the current underground hip-hop glut, his album is successful in establishing his Trackezoids production team (also including Decompoze, Mystik Legend, and Chic Masters), who



MASSIVE ATTACK

MASSIVE ATTACK DANNY THE DOG OST Virgin/UK/CD

To the relief of many, Massive Attack's first official foray into soundtrack composition (for the infinitely cool Luc Besson, no less) retreats from the chilly starkness that marked 2003's *100th Window*. The album, comprised of 21 brief, atmospheric instrumentals, is the group's most emotional work in years. Comparing *Danny the Dog* to past Massive Attack hallmarks like *Protection* or *Mezzanine* is somewhat counterproductive. The uptempo tracks especially remind us that this is music written for a martial arts movie—in the stiff industrial throb of "Simple Rules" or "Atta Boy," one can almost feel the spray of sweat as Jet Li's fist connects, slo-mo, with his opponent's jaw. For every superficial action sequence, however, 3D and studio engineer pal Neil Davidge offers introspective moments that blossom and linger. Zen garden tracks like "Sam" and "Two Rocks and a Cup of Water" impress with their delicate translucence, while the soaring strings of "Everybody's Got a Family" are heartbreakingly lovely. *Anna Balkrishna*

come through with an array of gritty but soulful beats that should garner them a lot more work in the near future. *Jesse Serwer*

OPIO TRIANGULATION STATION
Hiero Imperium/US/CD

Those seeking witty, melodic hip-hop in the new millennium need not worry: Opio swerves sharply into contemplative lyrics and gripping melodies startling enough to shake aficionados awake. This MC/producer has long repped the Oakland hip-hop intelligentsia via the Souls of Mischief, and it's hard not to sense Opio's deep affection for his genre's roots throughout this old-school-styled record. Standouts include the slammin' Jurassic 5-like cut "Confederate Burning," and "Talk Dirty," which floats hustler lyrics over airy, jazzy grooves. *Janet Tzou*



THE PERCEPTIONISTS BLACK DIALOGUE
Definitive Jux/US/CD

Certified as one of the most energetic, incessantly political live hip-hop trios around, The Perceptionists (comprised of the thickly-dreaded Mr. Lif, Akrobatic, and DJ Fakts One) release a debut worthy of the hype their shows command. Social theory and musical aesthetic find kindred partnership on *Black Dialogue*. Translation: their preaching doesn't compromise sonic integrity; in fact, Lif and Akrobatic's hard, bouncing rhymes are equaled only by massively structured beats. "Blo" and "Memorial Day," two live killers, translate gorgeously, and when Guru steps aboard on the title track, the torch is passed to this new generation of thought-provoking rhyme slayers. *Derek Beres*



PITA GET OFF
Häpna/SWE/CD

"Babel" is the ultimate Pita song. Peter Rehberg trash-compacts a game show horn blast that shoots 100 feet in the air and then shatters into a thousand pieces. He struggles to resurrect the corpse, but quits when it's a hassle. That fine abuse of electricity and nerve appears on *Get Off*, his third "Get" album (after *Get Down* and *Get Out*). Rehberg's handiwork veers from plangent, bell-rung drones to nose-blown hits of feedback and digital mulch. Just don't take him seriously—his drone piece that sounds like nuclear fallout lathering a city is titled "Like Watching Shit on a Shelf." *Cameron Macdonald*



PONY UP!

Pony Up! (l-r): Lindsay Willis, Camilla Wynne Ingr, Laura Willis, Lisa Smith, and Sarah Moundroukas

PONY UP! Dim Mak/US/CD

It's not easy to write charming/hilarious/flirty pop songs that aren't sickeningly sweet, but Montreal's Pony Up! makes it happen with flawless, quirky ingenuity. Sidestepping pop's emo self-obsession for wicked playfulness, Pony Up! offers charismatically off-kilter song structures that sway between dark melodies and bright vocal harmonies, and they opt for lyrics like: "Yeah, you're funny/You're cute/but let's move on that's all been proven/If I left you wouldn't miss me/I don't care/Shut up and kiss me." Lindsay Willis (drums) and Lisa Smith (bass/vocals) keep the rhythm section tight while Laura Willis (keyboards/vocals) and Camilla Wynne Ingr (everything else) add eclectic timbres. Alternating lead vocals with guitarist Sarah Moundroukas' jangly arpeggios gives each track unique sensibilities—the kind titles like "Marlon Brando's Laundromat" and love songs for Matthew Modine deserve. Pony Up! is like that friend who's a complete spaz...and undeniably loveable. *Carla Costa*

PLASTIQ PHANTOM
Imputor?/US/CD

Plastiq Phantom is a conductor of heavily digitized sonic cacophonies that persistently sink under their own density; recognizable paths of piano, trap set, or stringed instruments turn up, then dart back into random shards of binary bliss just as quickly. He releases colorful squiggles and flecks of sound from the speakers like so many monkeys on speed. In some parts the environment is recklessly organic (in that heavily broken-up rockist way) at the time, it's like three Mouse on Mars tracks skipping alongside those monkeys, chasing that chalice of balance between glitch and the guitar. *J. David Marston*

RAINSTICK ORCHESTRA
THE FLOATING GLASS KEY IN THE SKY
Ninja Tune/UK/CD

Ninja Tune gets happier as 100 releases approach, and the 96th is a nice one for both their mood and ours. *The Floating Glass Key in the Sky* is the debut offering of Rainstick Orchestra, two DJs who met four years ago in Japan. RO takes up guitar, piano, bass, and sequencers, emulating the minimalist experiments of John Cage and Steve Reich within jazz thresholds with a touch of Detroit techno and atmospheric hip-hop. If you like Cinematic Orchestra, Bonobo, Mouse on Mars, and Mr. Scruff, give Rainstick a shake. *Stacy Meyn*

SHANNON LET THE MUSIC PLAY
Shout Factory/US/CD

It was Christmas/Hanukkah time of 1983 when my pops surprised me with an all-in-one unit by SoundDesign. A fifth grader with a new stereo, the first thing I did was tune in to NYC's Z-100, which was starting to break a new sound called electro. Shannon's "Let The Music Play" announced a new kind of diva for a new kind of disco, and while she was seducing us strangers with "this beat he can't ignore," she was achieving Afrika Bambaataa's "perfect beat." Not surprising, then, when she wanted to revive her career in a new era she went with Bam on "Do The Wrong Thing." They're both on this "Best Of," including another club classic, "Give Me Tonight." *Daniel Siwek*

GARNET SILK MUSIC IS THE ROD
VP/US/CD

It wouldn't be a stretch to call Garnet Silk the reggae Jeff Buckley. Like the New York City avant-rock heartthrob, Silk possessed an indescribably beautiful and emotive voice and died a bizarre, tragic death at a young age, just as he appeared to be reaching a creative plateau. Beginning with the haunting, minimal "Splashing Dashing," VP's two-disc set accumulates a large chunk of Silk's recognizable output, culminating in a brief interview done just a few months before his death. The past year has seen a return to form for conscious dancehall singers, making it just the right time for a retrospective of an increasingly forgotten one—one who helped usher in the last revival more than a decade ago. *Jesse Serwer*

SLOPE KOMPUTERGROOVE
Sonar Kollektiv/GER/CD

Following last year's *M*, the Berlin duo of Daniel Paul and DJ Honesty (Slope) has honed their ability to make kick-ass dancefloor grooves, and further developed their skills at writing electronic soul songs. Naturally, having a great array of guest vocalists helps, and they number Capitol A (who rolls his thang on the ace electro boogie title track), Colin Rich, and Clara Hill amongst them. Stand-out tracks feature the wonderful Ovasoul 7, and this is no coincidence. This man's voice oozes soul over Slope's increasing ability and confidence to capture the boogie, whatever the tempo, style, or genre. *Steve Nickolls*

SOLE LIVE FROM ROME
anticon/US/CD

Sole is the archetypal anticon MC, rapping with urgency, causticity, white-liberal acuity, self-deprecation, self-consciousness, and skewed wit. He could fill half of *XLR8R* with his notable quotables. *Live From Rome* is Sole's most accomplished opus yet. This is partly due to Alias, Controller 7, Tepr, and especially Odd Nosedam's phenomenal production, which fuses psychedelically warped drones, guitar, cello, and organ samples to dusty-grooved funkiness. On "Manifesto 232," Sole claims to be a "new-age demagogue," and his voice bears the fiery certainty of an end-times proselytizer—and current events don't exactly contradict him. Here he reinforces his status as one of rap's foremost clarions. *Dave Segal*



BOOM BIP
Blue Eyed In The Red Room

The sequel to *Seed to Sun*. An album of organic and electronic instrumental productions and songs with Nina Nastasia and Gruff Rhys from the Super Furry Animals. On Lex Records, 2LP, CD and special limited edition CD with bonus disc. www.boom-bip.com



DJ HELL
Ny Muscle

DJ HELL has been to New York. With his new album *Ny Muscle*. Hell went with the flow of a city whose heartbeat pounds faster than Europe's. One of most successful Techno DJs brings his special US edition, including a bonus track and videos of singles "Keep on Waiting" and "Je Regrette Everything." Featuring Alan Vega, Billie Ray Martin, James Murphy, Erlend Oye, Tommie Sunshine, and John Selway.



ABE DUQUE
So Underground It Hurts

With his new album, *So Underground It Hurts*. Abe Duque tells the story of electronic music with all its backs and forths between Europe and America. Who could be a better narrator than one of the godfathers of techno, Abe has distilled this vibe with his collection of 12's, and condensed it into a true album that equals much more than its parts. A true classic.



EMANON
Waiting Room

Consisting of emcee Aloe Blacc and producer DJ Exile (Slum Village, Ghostface, Jay-Dee), a description of Emanon's music is not enough to fully grasp the sense of creativity within the two artists. Aloe Blacc presents his words in ways never attempted by other emcees, which makes his lyricism as an instrument as important as the beat itself. Exiles beats are orchestrations far beyond the sample loop and break beat.



LIQUID LOOP
Reset

Liquid Loop was established in 1998 as a live band performing their own style—a unique blend of jazz, soul, broken beats, Brazilian sounds and deep disco beats. With fantastic young German vocalist, Philipp Weiss, Liquid Loop presents their first full-length album. *Reset*.



MARCO POLO
Canned Goods

Four years ago, Marco Polo was a little hip-hop junkie living in Toronto, Canada studying music engineering. Now he is a rising producer in Hip Hop, producing for such artists as Rasco, Masta Ace, Big Noyd, and Jean Grae. His debut, *Canned Goods* on PocketsInTent Entertainment, features instrumentals showcasing his production skills.



MF DOOM
Live From Outer Space

A rare recording from an incredible MF Doom live performance featuring classic cuts from albums like *Operation Dooomsday*, *Madvillain*, and *MMM...Food*.

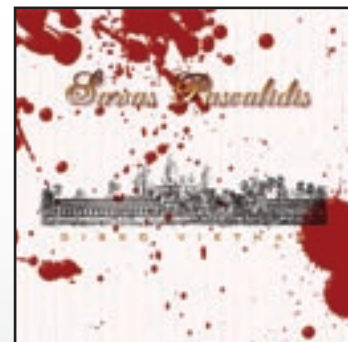


MOUNT SIMS
Wild Light

Ever since his mind-blowing debut *Ultrasound*, Mount Sims has been recognized as one of the important acts of the Electronic/Techno/Punk genre. His new album, *Wild Light*, clearly shows the continuation of Mount Sim's very unique definition of modern electronic music. He combines the subtleties of modern electronic music with his transfigured adaptation of '80s dark wave music.

AVAILABLE AT:

Amoeba - SF & LA • Armand's - Philadelphia • Aron's - LA • Atomic - Milwaukee • Bent Crayon - Cleveland • Criminal - Atlanta • Cue Records - Philly • Flat Black & Circular - East Lansing • Gramophone - Chicago • HipHopSite.com • Kim's - NYC Let It Be - Minneapolis • Newbury Comics - MA • Other Music - NYC • Park Ave - Orlando • Plan 9 - Richmond • Respect Records - Seattle • Sandboxautomatic.com • 360 Vinyl and Clothing - Portland • Twist & Shout - Denver



SAVAS PASCAUDIS
Disko Vietnam

Disko Vietnam is shrouded in dark synths entangled with firm body-movin beats and acid bleeps. Wide acid sounds squelch their way throughout *Disko Vietnam*, while at the same time accompanied by crisp drum rhythms. Savas takes from the past and gives to the future and so expands on all the best elements of disco, acid-electro, and straight up techno.



PASSION DANCE ORCHESTRA
Dreamland

Dreamland showcases Lars' unique writing/arranging skills and exceptional musicianship. Many of his tracks have been supported by such DJ heavyweights as MAW, Jazzanova, DJ Spinna, Rainer Truby, Osunlade and many others. There is no question of why Lars and his Needs Label has become a synonym for soulful high quality music.



SELF SCIENTIFIC
Gods & Gangstas

The sophomore release from LA hip-hop favorites, Chase Infinite & DJ Kahil (aka Self Scientific), *Album* features Xzibit, Planet Asia, Phil tha Agony, Strong Arm Steady and more.



LE POP EN DUO
Various Artists

Available for the first time in the US from Cologne based label, Le Pop Musik, *Le Pop En Duo* continues what the first two *Le Pop* compilations began. This album documents the state of French pop with a special focus on the duet. Featuring the big names of "la nouvelle scene française." Pleasing to the ear, very French, and more than anything very, very pop.

SONS OF ARMAGEDDON THE SOFTEST TOUCH

Magic Pony/US/CD
CLAYTON & FULCRUM THE SOUL PURPOSE
Natural Selection/US/CD

SOA takes the words acid jazz seriously with an album that combines all the elements of jazz and hits puree. Verging on the hallucinatory, SOA mixes up instrumentation, even throwing a theremin against scratching at one point. That can be a flaw, though—sometimes SOA seems to be twiddling knobs just because they can. Clayton & Fulcrum, by contrast, don't push as many boundaries, but their disc works nonetheless. With a beautifully played flute against dreamy melodies and uncomplicated percussion, their music floats; the kind of groove you ride into dawn before hitting a bleary-eyed breakfast somewhere. *Luciana Lopez*

SOUND TRIBE SECTOR 9 ARTIFACT

1320/US/CD
 Putting the jam band DIY mentality to good use, this unique collection of artists and musicians has become one of the country's most intriguing, innovative outfits around. Known for kaleidoscopic, Buddhist-influenced hallucinogenic sound tapestries (think Sigur Rós on mushrooms), *Artifact*, on their own indie label, features their more melodic aspects. The interplay between tasteful, jazzy rhythms, sparse piano and guitar work, occasional vocals ("Better Day") and spaced-out innerspace musings ("Tokyo") is a cut above most groove-based jam bands' studio work. Budding masters of many trades, *Artifact* is a worthwhile relic for future reference. *Derek Beres*

THIEVERY CORPORATION THE COSMIC GAME

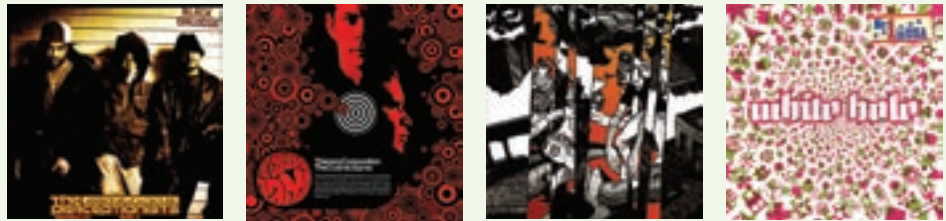
ESL/US/CD
 Leave behind the hypocrisy involved in Thievery Corporation's dissemination of copy-encrypted CDs for review that will not play on democratic platforms like iTunes. Song titles like "Revolution Solution," "Amerimacka," "The Time We Lost Our Way," and many more seem laughable in the face of Thievery's burgeoning P2P paranoia. The music is standard Thievery chill-out, except this time they front superstars like The Flaming Lips, Perry Farrell, and David Byrne. In other words, Thievery wants the adult alternative crowd on lockdown. If you're a lounge-hop head with a convenient sense of irony, this Corporation is a far cry from the one that worried about *The Richest Man in Babylon* last time around. *Scott Thill*

TIPPER SURROUNDED

MyUtopia/US/CD
 Not one to let a pesky thing like hearing damage get in his way, nu-school breaks producer and Fuel Records co-founder Tipper bounced back with a zeal for sonic experimentation. *Surrounded* marks his fourth full-length project and the latest installment in a career that has increasingly stepped further away from the abrasive d&b breaks and the (literally) smoking, mega-decibel soundsystems that he once helped pioneer. Tracks like "No Dice" delve smoothly into moody beats and spare instrumentals, providing the perfect background for a swank bar rather than a frenzied rave—more in line with where Tipper's original fans are probably chilling today. *Janet Tzou*

TRIOLA TRIOLA IM FUNFTONRAUM

Kompakt/GER/CD
 An iconic figure on Germany's techno scene, Jörg Burger tends to cook up new aliases every few releases or so; Triola is the newest edition to the fold, meant to complement his previous work as The Bionaut, Burger/Ink, The Modernist, and more. What has remained constant throughout his lengthy discography is a meticulous attention to detail—similar to the rich palette of Swayzak or Kirk DeGiorgio, as opposed to the monochromatic, stripped-down vision of techno espoused by Jeff Mills or Adam Beyer. This album is no different, as luxuriant melodies steeped in effusive warmth provide for a relaxing listening experience and an introduction to Kompakt's softer side. *Brock Phillips*



NU:TONE BRAVE NU WORLD

Hospital/UK/CD
 If experimentation is vital to the life of an artist, then melodic drum & bass producer Dan Gresham (a.k.a. Nu:Tone) should see his career last to a ripe old age. Using the abundant variety of instruments made possible by modern software, his debut album boasts a fearless and original use of the soundboard. Kickdrums, cowbells, and saxophones share the symphony space with guests like Hospital bosses London Elektricity, helping the album resist easy formulas in favor of unpredictable and ultimately more interesting musical structures. The end result is proof that experiments pay off: *Brave Nu World* is simultaneously enlivening, sexy, melancholy, and amusing, proving d&b doesn't have to be dark and dangerous to be dancefloor worthy. *Jenn Marston*

TTC BATARDS SENSIBLES

Big Dada/UK/CD
 Forget what you heard about Snoop and Lil' Skateboard P's "Drop It Like It's Hot": Parisian weirdo thugs TTC have come with the beat of the year on "Dans Le Club," and several of the other tracks on *Batards Sensibles* could be in the running as well. Since I've retained precious little from college French classes, you get no explanation of the lyrics. It's probably just as well since you're likely asking yourself why the hell you need a rap album that you can't understand. The beats, that's why. *Stephen Christian*

WHITE HOLE PINK ALBUM

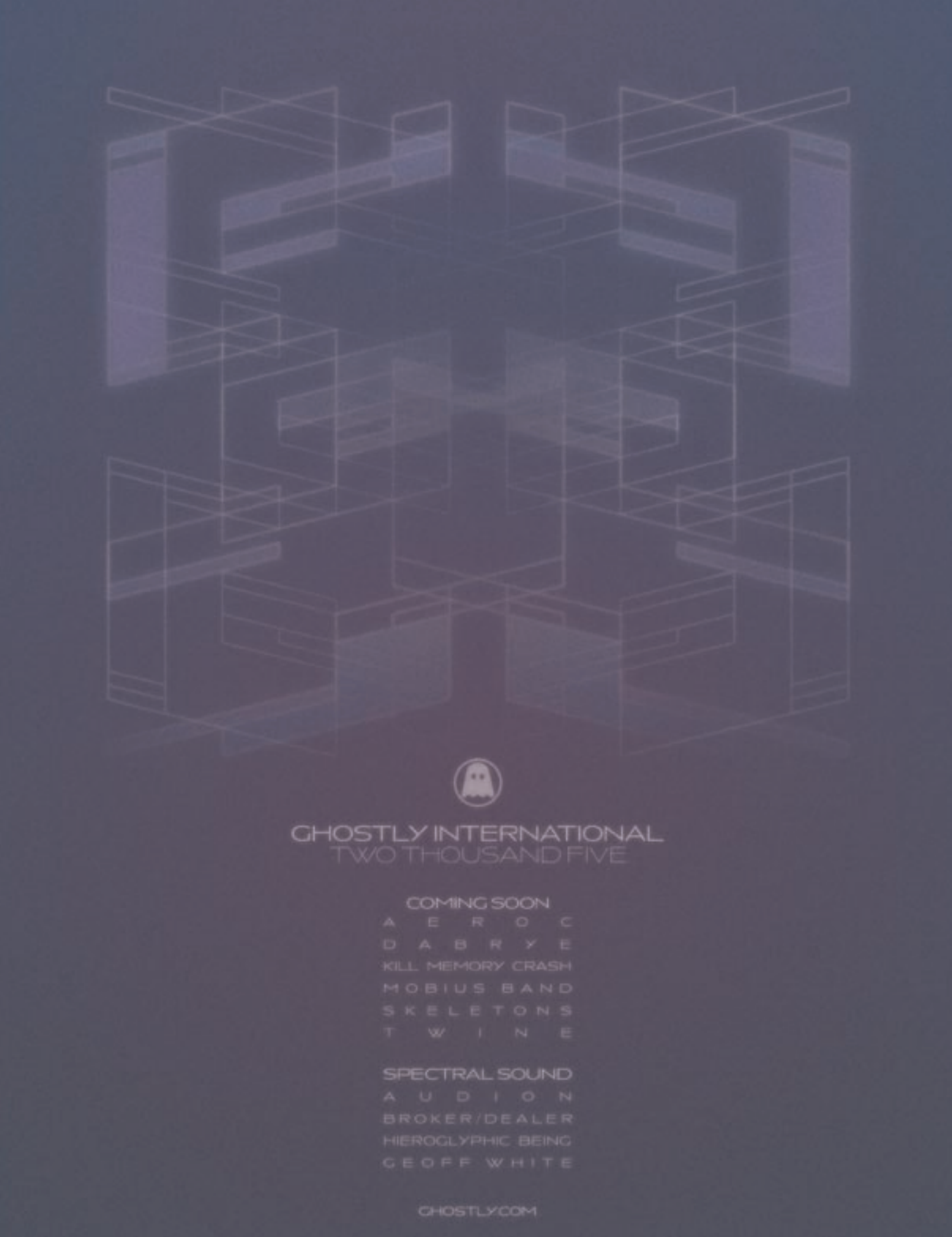
Kitty-Yo/GER/CD
 With their full-length debut as White Hole, longtime collaborators Nicholas Bussman and Hanno Leichtmann unveil a brainy take on hip-hop that has Berlin written all over it. There's a compelling mechanical vivacity to this album, as if a gang of kitchen appliances suddenly came to life and hit the pavement looking for a pack of smokes. The toothy electro opener "He's in Jail" makes clear that the key to the *Pink Album* lies in its metallic, vibrating basslines; they're a propulsive backbone on tracks like "Le Rap Du Psy" and the drunken, jangling "Ingrus." *Anna Balkrishna*

TYPICAL CATS CIVIL SERVICE

Galapagos4/US/CD
 Chicago's Galapagos4 label relocated to Oakland last year and it seems that, stylistically, the Typical Cats aren't far behind. On their second full-length, the Windy City trio of Qwel, Qwazaar, and Denizen Kane expound spacey, sun-soaked philosophies over strutting, jazzy beats—a formula fit for the West Coast. The Midwest influence isn't lost on them—their flow suggests they were star pupils at the Slug School of Rapping. Smoky but unspectacular production, provided by the aptly-titled DJ Natural, augmented by a trio of live musicians, creates a comfortable cushion for this trio's clever verbal give-and-take, which would be at home anywhere. *Patrick Sisson*

ZORN ALL WE CAN DO IS ENJOY THE RIDE

Lux Nigra/GER/CD
 With a page taken straight out of Detroit's Octave One and Planet E's books and tempered with a healthy dash of opiate visions, Berlin's Zorn conjures up a beautiful, melancholic futurescape. Rather than showcasing a diversity of styles, the album feels like one long, continuous track—a very tasteful, well-conceived track that never gets boring or stale. Because of this, it's hard to pick out highlights, but both the ultra-obtuse "Gone" and the moody "City of Industry" struck a chord somewhere very deep inside me. Pick this up if you're a fan of ambient/dubby techno or Vangelis. *Alex Posell*



don't sleep



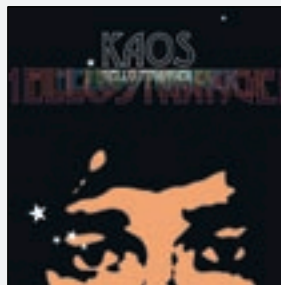
Joey Negro
In The House 03.08 (DEFECTED)

Disco house don, Joey Negro, mixed up the next In The House album on Defected Records. Featuring tracks by Blaze, Kings of Tomorrow, Reel People and Dimitri from Paris, this limited edition 3xCD set includes a bonus CD-ROM with exclusive content! Also available in 2xLP.



Julius Papp
Heartbeat: Vol. 2 03.08 (LOVESLAP)

Holding residency at San Francisco's famous monthly Foundation party, Julius Papp has displayed his formidable skills as a DJ as well as his unparalleled ability to throw a wildly popular party. Equally at home or on the dancefloor, Heartbeat, Volume 2 showcases Julius' experience of years behind the decks speaking clearly.



KAOS
Hello Stranger 03.08 (IK7)

KAOS, (former member of Terranova & Ghost Cauldron) returns with an intense debut featuring the vocals of Erlend Øye, Matt B of Rapture, Daniel Wang, and more. Hello Stranger possesses a versatile sound, blending electronica, disco, funk and rock all into one continuous flow.



A Guy Called Gerald
To All Things ... 02.15 (IK7)

To All Things What They Need is an album that is shaped by a gentle and deep atmosphere that exudes an irresistible sensuality. Featuring vocals from Finley Quaye and Ursula Rucker, A Guy Called Gerald fuses oriental harmony fragments with electronic sounds, where an intense, soulful sensation reverberates.



DJ Halo
Sound Deluxe 2 03.08 (Large)

DJ Halo of H-Foundation together with Large Music present Sound Deluxe 2—a classic blend of deep, soulful house with spacey and sophisticated rhythms. Featuring tracks by Roy Davis Jr., Solar House, Julius Papp, and Kerri Chandler.



John Digweed
Fabric 20 03.08 (FABRIC)

"Fabric's 20th compilation... is nothing short of incredible." — About.com

"(John Digweed) is a DJ who simply seeks out the best in electronic dance music..." — AllMusic.com



RZA & Keb Darge
Kings Of Funk 03.08 (BBE)

The Wu Tang's RZA and London's "Legendary Deep Funkster" Keb Darge join BBE Record's impressive roster of compilers for the newest addition of the Kings of Series. Featuring Rare Funk Classics from Sly & The Family Stone, Ohio Players, Harlem Orchestra, Bobby Humphries and more!



Kings Of Tomorrow
Trouble 03.08 (DEFECTED)

Chameleon-like house artist, Sandy Rivera, is set to turn even more heads with his hotly-anticipated "Trouble" album...

"It's a master piece" — IDJ Magazine

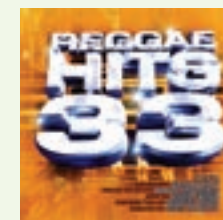
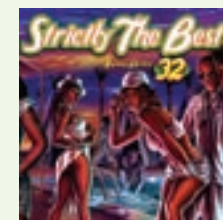
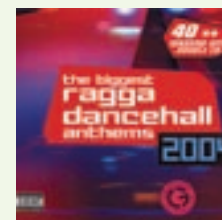


Louie Vega
Dance Ritual 03.08 (R2)

The legendary Dance Ritual party is DJ/Producer Louie Vega's cultural and spiritual home. Here he has weaved a journey of burning vocals and uplifting soul guided by his ever-present Latin and African roots. Featuring Natalie Cole, Thievery Corporation, David Byrne, Stephanie Mills, Masters at Work.



▲ Macka Diamond (Peter Dean Rickards)



SINGERS VERSUS DJS: THE DEBATE RAGES

At its core, dancehall isn't as much about individual artists as it is about the dance itself. Its topics—politics, fashion, herb, social commentary, sex (well, maybe not that one)—are all secondary to the primal urgency of *de drum an' de bass*. To enter the dancehall is to step into a realm of nonstop twists and turns, of endless versions, infinite new dances, wicked riddims, *criss* lyrics, and engaging singing styles.

It's almost pointless to debate whether singers or deejays are in the forefront of the "up to di time" trends in the reggae dancehall genre. True, we've seen a fair amount of recent breakout hits by freshly-minted, smooth-tongued crooners and divas (among them I-Wayne, Archie Wonder, Bascom X, and Chrissy Mai), but it's not like roughneck deejays are going away anytime soon—new faces like Soltex, Voicemail, Vybiz Kartel, and Macka Diamond are continually emerging. Plus, there's plenty of old dogs—like Beres Hammond, Capleton, Sean Paul, Bounty Killer, Beenie Man, and Chuck Fender—still making hits these days. It could be argued that singers widen dancehall's appeal and bring in more mainstream and female listeners, but DJs do their part by keeping the hardcore fans happy. All in all, the genre is solid as a rock, talent-wise, and there's certainly no shortage of energy in the music.

Fittingly, the hotness vapors from Elephant Man's recent lava trail of big dance *chunes* (which continues

with "Bun Bad Mind") inform the latest compendiums by the big boys of dancehall—VP, Jet Star, and Greensleeves—as do neckbone-tickling vocoders, minor-key keyboard melodies, and tsunami-level waves of bass. This year's crop of jiggy reggae boomshots contains a dizzying assortment of DJs barking commands to the massive (i.e. "Bust the place!", "Over de wall!"). Meanwhile, the lover's rock genre continues the Jamaican and English fascination with soul stylings, while dancehall's close relation to hip-hop ensures contemporary urban street appeal.

For pure dancehall madness, the double-disc riddim overkill of *Ragga Anthems* is hard to beat, but exclusives by I-Wayne and Lady Saw (with Remy Martin) keep *STB* competitive, and *RH33* churns along with old favorites like Frankie Paul and Chuck Fender, and new stars like Natty King, Shola Ama, and Savana. There's a fair amount of overlap between the three comps, yet each one also contains 'nuff killer jams not found on the others. Indeed, the biggest difference between them might be the fact that the UK labels are marketing to a slightly different demographic; the English discs cater more to straight-up yardie sensibilities, while the VP disc should satisfy the dancehall cravings of American crossover audiences. Take your pick or pick them all—either way, you'll "move ya body" like Nina Sky. *Eric K. Arnold*

COMP REVIEWS 03.05

THE BIGGEST RAGGA DANCEHALL ANTHEMS 2004
Greensleeves/UK/CD

STRICTLY THE BEST 32
VP/US/CD

REGGAE HITS 33
Jet Star/UK/CD



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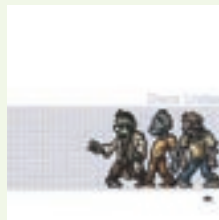
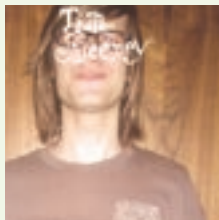


ROCHE AND DJ ENSO

Roche (Jeff Saint, left) and DJ Enso

SOLOS IN STEREO Solos/US/CD

A coalition of artists headquartered in the Bay Area, Solos Records messes with a wide variety of sounds; they're rooted in hip-hop but unafraid to embrace more abstract electronic action. This compilation-style album showcases seven artists over 14 tracks, with overall quality ranging from outstanding to aight. DJ Enso and Louis' "High Spirits" is a stellar, straight-ahead rap tune, with forceful rhymes laid over an absolutely banging beat. The spooky production of Roche's "Beaches and Crème remix" is cool, though the lyrical approach veers dangerously close to anticon territory. Jovian's impressive "Wings of Red" instrumental lies somewhere between Boom Bip and Nobody while CB Radio's "Blue Skies" is on the minimalist, beep-laden tip. Though not without its flaws, *Solos In Stereo* is a strong effort that will appeal to more adventurous beat fiends. *Brolin Winning*



AFTERDARK SAN FRANCISCO

Kinkysweet/US/CD
DESTINATIONLOUNGE SAN FRANCISCO
Revive the Soul/US/CD

Both of these two-disc compilations showcase the smooth, laid-back house and chill-out that has become the hallmark of the West Coast. Though neither is all that innovative, they're both solid examples of why SF's a landmark on any world scene map. *Afterdark* features house tracks full of fat basslines and sweet vocals from the Om and Transport catalogs. *DestinationLounge*, divided into "relax" and "revive" discs, features names like Julius Papp, Miguel Migs, and Soulstice—all of whom, unsurprisingly, appear on *Afterdark* too. But there's a reason for that: they're pretty damn good. *Luciana Lopez*

BREAKBEAT SCIENCE: EXERCISE 4
Breakbeat Science/US/CD

NYC's Breakbeat Science releases the fourth installment of its *Exercise* series, as co-founder DB serves up a 15-track dose of BBS know-how. With the exception of one Pieter K track licensed from Offshore, the track list is exclusively Breakbeat Science material, including cuts from DB & Stakka, DJ Dara, Dune, Chris. SU, Deep Blue, and more. The initial dark, tech-step demolition soon gives way to trippy, beat-carved funk and atmospheric meanderings before the mix is

taken home by DB's affinity for vocal-laced jungle and ecstatic old schooliness. *Doug Morton*

DEEP SPACE NYC VOL. 1
Deep Space Media/US/CD

Turn up the bass and enjoy the ride—25-year DJ veteran François K is behind the wheel and the destination is the land of dub. Along the way we'll visit Jamaica for tastes of the origins from The Skatalites, the UK for the other end of the BPM spectrum (with drum & bass's Matrix and Fierce), and even Detroit for Jeff Mills and Carl Craig's vision of the future. FK has been refining our itinerary for over two years at his Monday night Deep Space party in NYC and now we can all enjoy his skills as a selector. Fasten your seat belts. *Peter Nicholson*

DIRTY DIAMONDS 2
Diamond Traxx/FRA/CD
RVNG PRESENTS MX3: TIM SWEENEY
RVNG/US/CD

Two approaches to eclecticism and both are truly brilliant. In the blue trunks is the team from di-r-t-y.com, with a sequence of tracks that runs from rabbit punches like MoonDog's prissy "Voices of Spring" to roundhouses like Yello's stomping "Daily Disco" and Maurice Fulton's remix of Chicken Lips' "Do It Proper." In the red trunks is Tim Sweeney, the mind behind

WNYU's Beats in Space radio show, who packs a well-mixed bag of tricks, including the astounding 1-2-3 combo of Tones on Tail, Radiohead, and Cybotron, plus a wicked uppercut with Carl Craig's "Climax." Take your pick here—*Dirty's* separated selection of significant tracks, or Sweeney's mind-bending mix. Let the match begin! *Peter Nicholson*

DISCO UNDEAD
Device/UK/CD

Sometimes the best horror movie soundtrack is flat, soulless, and nauseous. The music gives you dry heaves, not screams. *Disco Undead* nails that point in its collection of '70s Italian horror flick soundtracks and John Carpenter scores revised as cute electro-pop fodder. To hear bedroom bores on vintage Rolands and Korgs trying to emulate the bloodied fingerprints of filmmakers Dario Argento and Lucio Fulchi is amusing at best. However, Solenoid retains the *Suspria* theme's ungodliness and Le Syndicat Electronique reminds us why Afrika Bambaataa sampled Carpenter's synth-funk from *Assault on Precinct 13*. *Cameron Macdonald*

ELECTRO-DOMESTICO: MEXTRONICA
ATAT/MEX/CD

The Mexican electronic scene is really starting to grow into its own; but even though you can find out plenty about the Nortec Collective, Google names like Los Maestros Del Jet Set or Aquadelfin and you'd better know how to read Spanish. Luckily, as most of their songs are instrumentals, culture needs no words. This disc gives you an *aperitivo* taste of the scene, ranging from the operatic *Decada 2* (an act that borrows more from Klaus Nomi and Italo electro than Tijuana brass) to Ford Proco (almost as graceful as Pepito) to Jackson (who kicks it like Squarepusher). *Daniel Siwek*

FOURTHCITY 14
Fourthcity/US/CD

With the looming specter of a bygone era of grunge and the recent revitalization of Sub Pop, Seattle's electronic laptop provocateurs are often obscured by the city's rich rock history. However, *Fourthcity 14*, the recent compilation from the Seattle-based label and artist collective Fourthcity, exhibits a broad cluster of energetic producers who proudly display a myriad of digital influences. From the angular, industrial breaks of Former Selv's "Nichiyobi" to the sterile melancholy of Absolute Madman's "Requiem," the promising 18-track compilation forecasts clear skies ahead for a scene hidden by seemingly constant cloud cover. *Steve Marchese*

GENOCIDE IN SUDAN
Waxploitation/US/CD

The sweep of death and destruction in Sudan has been broad enough to move people across the world, so the range of artists on this album—the proceeds of which go to aid international aid agencies—makes sense. Admittedly, the track placement isn't always so cohesive—it is odd to hear the dubbed out "Truth and Rights" from Thievery Corporation right after the ragingly guitar-driven album opener, "NUGUNS" from System of a Down. The result is an album that leaves eclectic in the dust (Yoko Ono, Bad Religion, The Pretenders [remixed] and X-ecutioners), but with Sudan so maimed, any help makes a difference. *Luciana Lopez*

HEARTBEAT: MIXED BY DAVID HARNES
Loveslap/US/CD

California stalwart Harness launches this new house series from San Francisco's Loveslap with an excellently mixed compilation that leans toward deep and soulful. Though solid, the album's generally low-key—the kind of music you can pace yourself to. The album's sounds are made for a night filled with velvet lounge chairs, quality dancefloors, and flickering candles; tracks like Scientific Soul's "Pimenta Malaguenta," with its great accordion, are made for movement. Standing out is Harness' mix of "Black Music"—insistently gorgeous. *Luciana Lopez*

HOW TO KILL THE DJ [PART TWO]
Tigersushi/FRA/CD

How to Kill the DJ [Part Two] chronicles the diversity of Scottish DJs Twitch and Jonnie Wilkes, who run club night Optimo. It's a little bit goth/synth (Laibach, Depeche Mode), a little club classics ("Can U Feel It," Loose Joints), and a bit of punk (The Cramps, Revolting Cocks) tied together by minimal techno from the likes of Akufen, Villalobos, and Harco Pront; a second CD features obscure jams from Bush Tetras, Nouvelle Vague, and Arthur Russell. This isn't your average hands-in-the-air affair—it's a peaked-and-valleyed mix for those who require DJs to show context...and the depth of their record collections. Experienced record weasels need only apply. *Tyra Bangs*

INDIAN SOUNDSCAPES
Soleilmoon/US/CD

Insects, worship, coughing, hacking, rain, bells, bargaining, selling, laughing, birds, horns, train stations, music, children, monkeys, chai-wallah-ing, and commerce. Taken out of context, these sounds both repel and attract; even if you've never been to India, you'll feel your stomach rumble in amoebic anticipation. India has almost four times the population of the US in a space one-third the size, and the ambient sounds of daily life are inescapable. One of the recordist's goals here was to try to avoid the sounds of engines, resulting in a pointed aural description of daily life in India. The two-disc set is worth it for the handpainted box (made in Varanasi) alone. *Jesse Terry*

MINIMIZE TO MAXIMIZE
Minus/US/CD

Whereas the standard compilation sits back and cashes in on past highlights, *M2M* maintains the Minus dictum of focusing on forward progression. Each of these 11 cuts is an exclusive contribution from the label's impressive talent pool, offering a vivid scan of the global collective in motion. Niederflur, I.A. Bericochea, Slacknoise, and label-direktor Plastikman deliver big on the minimal techno end, while the funk factor gets properly bumped by False, Magda, Run Stop Restore, Dinky Dog, and Marc Houle. Mat Jonson gets his electro swerve on, but it's newcomer Heartthrob who just slam-dunks it with some especially infectious, bass-casting tech-house. *Doug Morton*

NICKODEMUS PRESENTS: CONEY ISLAND LOVE
Wonderwheel/US/CD

For years, Brooklyn-based Nickodemus has been known for throwing parties where he totes instruments and musicians in from across the world; this album, compiled and mixed by Nicko, reflects his reputation. The obligatory (and damned good) Latin influence is here in the Nicko and Osiris-remixed "Tanguedia 3" from tango legend Astor Piazzollo, but the album ranges farther with "Balkan Hot Step" from N.O.H.A. (now in a Nike ad) and "All is One" by The Spy from Cairo. Nick represents NYC as well with his own deep "Cleopatra's Bonus Beats." *Luciana Lopez*

SHAPES YELLOW
Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

Before the ascendancy of Brighton's Tru Thoughts label, few could have expected the seaside town south of London to unearth such a deep well of underground machine funk. On *Shapes Yellow*, the label's second global sampler, they link up with their sister hip-hop imprint Zebra Traffic and offer 13 pints of potent, forward thinking, and historically deferential downtempo. Exclusives from reliable mainstays Quantic Soul Orchestra and The Limp Twins steady an eclectic menu of certifiable two a.m. head-nodders courtesy of Dirty Diggers, Flevans, and veteran Welsh duo Headcase Ladz, unequivocally confirming a thirst-quenching funk contaminating Brighton's water supply. *Steve Marchese*

SLAM BUSH
Hard Knock/US/CD

Like preaching to the choir, there's not much on this record that we don't already know, though Slam Bush National Rhyme Contest winner Vanessa German alone is reason enough to pick up this comp. DJs loewater and Goodtimez expertly mix the 29 tracks, which include several PSA-type interludes and hot grooves from Lyrics Born and Mr. Lif. Allstars such as Jeru, Wydef, and Mos Def make appearances while Immortal Technique and Native Guns drop some inventive lines. Originally conceived to encourage voting among the hip-hop community, this collection of anti-Bush anthems continues to promote political awareness. *Amber Drea*

TRÜBY TRIO: RETREATED
Compost/GER/CD

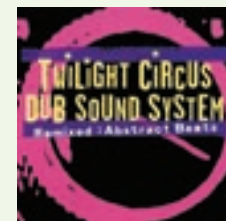
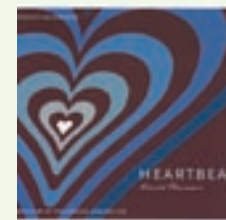
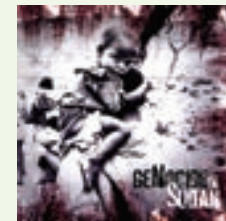
Remix compilations are often more beneficial to the artist than the listener. Not so where Rainer Trüby and friends are concerned. All the proof you need that Compost is discerning in his choice of remixers is here. From Guillaume Boulard's dirty reworking of "Make A Move" to the stunning Tiefschwarz remix of "Universal Love," these tracks from Trüby Trio's debut album, *Elevator Music*, still sound fresh and very DJ friendly. The only big let down is Louie Vega's insipid mix of "Alegre 2004," but that is more than made up for by the Unabombers' smart take on it. *Rob Wood*

TWILIGHT CIRCUS—REMIXED: ABSTRACT BEATS
M/NETH/CD

The second installment and conclusion to the *Twilight Remix Series*, *Abstract Beats* takes Moore's usually roots-oriented digital dub to the nightclub. The Netherlands selector usually makes lazy hazy riddims for the heads at the coffeeshops, but this record is a party, and almost every song requires flashing colors and blinding strobes. DJ Swingsett & Takuya keep the Augustus Pablo touches but throw in Black Box's "Everybody Everybody" swing...and swing it does, more than "Sing Sing." *Daniel Siwek*

WORLD PSYCHEDELIC CLASSICS 3—THE FUNKY FUZZY SOUNDS OF WEST AFRICA
Luaka Bop/US/CD

The last few years have seen a growing interest in '60s psychedelia from countries other than the UK or US; what was once the cult collector's secret has evolved into near-mainstream novelty. And now, after Stern's *Africa* and *Normal* compilations, David Byrne offers his curated vision of this wonderful, transient, cross-cultural collision. Though many of these tracks—ranging from Cream-rip-offs to James Brown-informed funk to Arabic blues—are acquired tastes, we can only hope this is only the beginning of this welcome trend. *Alexis Georgopoulos*



Ali (left) and Basti Schwarz

TIEFSCHWARZ

TIEFSCHWARZ: MISCH MASCH Fine/GER/CD

At times, it feels like—to paraphrase Killing Joke—"we're living in the '80s." Bad haircuts, amoral corporations, dirty wars, and untold human suffering are woes that remind us of the decade that good taste forgot. German brothers Ali and Basti Schwarz are interested in the '80s, too. On their remix CD—which constitutes one half of *Misch Masch*—their re-shapes of tracks by Hell, Mocky, and DJ Tal resurrect the EBM sounds of Front 242 and Nitzer Ebb; the disc's grinding, robotic rhythms are set in a context where every component is precisely ordered. Of course, Tiefschwarz are equally capable of making spine-tingling Italo tracks and air-punching techno-house—their mix of Phonique's "Red Dress" is compulsory listening for any aspiring dancefloor producer. A second CD—a DJ mix—demonstrates the Tiefschwarz boys are also talented DJs, moving seamlessly between classic techno and modern minimalist and electro-house innovations. *Richard Brophy*

**HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS:
MILES MAEDA**

I remember my first Miles Maeda tape like it was yesterday. It was given to me in the tiny college town of Grinnell, Iowa by a raver named Tigger and I cherished it until it tangled and fell apart in my cassette player. It was a psychedelic house mix that differed from the thumpy disco house of Sneak or the deeper sounds of Mark Farina but, like most Midwest DJs, Maeda wasn't afraid to be eccentric in his reach of records. Formerly only known (and treasured) by Heartlanders, Maeda has moved to San Diego and is in the process of going *so* international. A recent spate of twelves and EPs on Siesta, Aroma, Anonymous, Robsoul, and Odds and Ends are proving him to be a formidable producer of lowdown, trippy house. You can catch his mixes—*A La Peanut Butter Sandwiches* and *The New House Sound of Chicago*—on Igloo Records, or just peep him touring with the *Traveling Love Show*, a performance that combines his love with DJing with his other passion, teaching yoga. *Vivian Host*
www.milesmaeda.com

DJ COLETTE HYPNOTIZE 0m/US/12

Four amazing mixes, one beautiful song. Kaskade's mix is heavenly in rich harmonies and textures; Gene Ferris goes down smooth and sweet like a Mai Tai; CPen and Angel Alanis deliver an edgy, synthy, nuwave journey; and Jason Hodges' version is a bouncy and sassy moneymaker shaker. You will never tire of this! *MM*

NO ASSEMBLY FIRM INTERGALACTIC FRENZY EP Robsoul/FRA/12

The artists formerly known as No Assembly Required provide us with some old-school style acid tidbits on "Acid Attack," a beat-'em-up drum track on "Martian Beats," and a haunting interpretation of *War Of The Worlds* on "Planetary Invasion." Their names may have been changed to protect the innocent, but the music remains unscathed! *MM*

EAST COAST BOOGIEMEN & DJ HEATHER PICTURE OF YOU Black Cherry/US/12

This two-parter has another stellar collection of remixes: Jason Hodges, Natural Rhythm, Cla, LCG. My favorite, though, is the original mix by ECB and DJ Heather. Each mix has its unique signature and fragrance; together, this is a bouquet of full-blooming artistry for the premier release on Heather's new label. *MM*



**SODA INC SODA INC REMIXES
Plastic City/GER/12**

Babak Shayan and Jon Silva's expansive tech-house debut *Full Moon* garnered spins from Ian Pooley and Laurent Garnier, amongst other enthusiasts. Hear why on this remix set that features Greenskeepers' feisty shuffle, S-Sentials' ambient-pad tribal mix, and Rene Breitbarth's dub-echo mellow house rework. Hard to pick a favorite—each makes the disco ball sparkle a little brighter in its own way. *Tomas*

**ELECTRIC KIDS LIVE TO DANCE
MISTER J RIDE EXQUIS
Missive/FRA/12**

France's Missive are on a roll with recent electro-house-isms like "Live To Dance," whose A-side "After Mix" is a tracky, darkside stormer with a bubbling cauldron of acid; the "Marathon Mix" gets a bit more melodic and driving. But it's Mister J who's on top, injecting a fresh take on the burgeoning genre with a jazzy trumpet breakdown amongst crisp, dubbed-out rhythms and getting dirty on "Soul On Mac" with heavily swung hi-hats and off-kilter melodies. Solid. *Mike Battaglia*

**NICK CHACONA ANGEL DUST SWAN DIVE
Bear Funk/UK/12**

Bear Funk seems to have a thing for New York these days. Or perhaps New York's got a thing for exciting producers that keep house music interesting. Either way you cut it, Nick Chacona's debut single for Chicken Lip man Stevie Kotey's label is an essential release. While "Being There" revels in Italo-styled synth debauchery, "Angel Dust Swan Dive" drives the point home with some uptempo psychedelia, sans tie-dye and patchouli of course. *Roy Dank*

**THE SHIFT CRUSIN'
Blunted Funk/US/12**

New York's Scottie B and Chris Tempas produce house as The Shift when they're not busy playing live as a full band with the project. On their sixth release for Blunted Funk, the live element is represented with sax and Rhodes keyboard flourishes over their scissor-clipped vocals and deep-dipping bass throbs. John Lerner's remix adds a hefty drum shuffle and *karazee* noises, plus more darn sax. I'll pop a pill and cruise to this. *Derek Grey*

**MAYAKU IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN
Outergaze/JPN/12**

Globalization today means dirty house funkateers like the Belgian trio Mayaku crossing multiple oceans for a release on a Japanese label. But with their electrifying mix of rare groove sample edits, big-big four/four drum loops, and colorful, dubbed-out keyboards, I can see labels fighting for the right to put out these modern day Loft anthems. Think Krivit remixing Freeform Five and you know what kind of dancefloor therapy you're in for. *Hector Cedillo*

**MARKUS NIKOLAI & NINA MR. BIG STAR
Headinghome/US/12**

Heads up! SoCal's Headinghome imprint is about to unleash a flurry of global club-worthy singles. Germany's Markus Nikolai always gives his cheeky pop songs a dash of sassy funk. And although singer Nina Gerhard is mildly off-key, Nikolai's head-turning bass drops and solid song composition assure this'll hit big. Lance "Land Shark" DeSardi provides a synthy halo over the song, but star remix honors go to Dubloner, whose snappy, intricate microdub mix gets the blood pumping. *Tomas*

**ABYSM FUTURE LOVE
Systematic/GER/12**

Looking for a set filler in between those Get Physical and Turbo releases? How about this slab of understated '80s-influenced house? Thumping bass and whispered female vocals drive "Future Love" along, while "Future Funk" is a disco/electro-funk inspired thing with space noises. Everything here is crisp and precise, but maybe too much so—more grit, please. *Tyra Bangs*

**AGORA RHYTHM GALAXY
Nitegrooves/US/12**

Ask any house head what the definition of a "late night" track is and their eyes will probably mist over with memories of dancing to Pepe Braddock's "Burning" or Peace Division's early ambient dance tracks on Low Recordings. Warm pads, swirling synths, chugging organic/percussive rhythms—that's late-night house, and what Agora Rhythm delivers on "Galaxy." Close your eyes and let this play. *Derek Grey*

**LAND SHARK SLIPPAGE
Coco Machete/US/12**

Lance Desardi's music is everywhere at the moment, and we're not complaining. On his latest solo effort, the Dallas transplant to SF reflects house music's current interest in '80s synth-dance music with a minimal, melancholy tune made for dancing to with the lights off. The chorus laments "*Time slips away/tomorrow's just another day*"; anyone at work on a Monday after a weekend of partying can relate. Despite the gloominess, this could be the Shark's breakthrough single. *Tomas*



"I respect XLR8R because they look beyond the face value of the music and explore the issues, whether personal or political, that mold the artist."

—Mr. Lif, The Perceptionists

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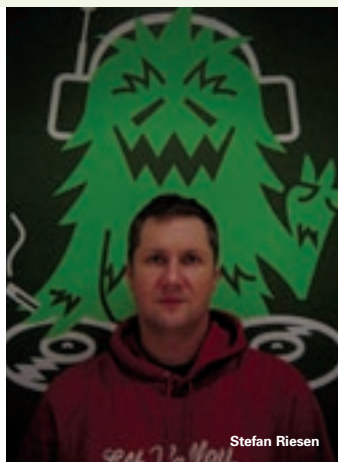
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PHOTO: Joe Johnson

TECHNO LABEL PROFILE: MORRIS AUDIO



Prior to 2000, Switzerland had a lot of chocolate, a lot of Rolexes, and a lot of foreign peoples' fortunes—what it didn't have were enough good techno labels. Then came Stefan Riesen, who founded the Morris Audio label and slowly began releasing fantastic microhouse, minitechno, dubby 4/4, and heavily processed dancefloor jams. Along the way, he began amassing quite an impressive international roster, including the bleeping sounds of Ohioans Jeff Samuel and Geoff White, Moscow's throbbing SCSI-9, Stockholm's deep house don John Dählback, and Stuttgart's Chicago-obsessed Jackmate, among others. But that's not all keeping Riesen busy. He also runs labels Superbra (sexy tech-house) and Phont (hard tribal techno), and sublabel Morris Audio Citysport Edition, which was launched in 2003.

"The name Citysport is in fact the model of a baby car," he says, explaining the moniker. "And I thought the name is cool, as clubbing is also a kind of city sport! But Citysport differs in two aspects from the main label: the releases are basically limited and the sound is more diverse, ranging from deep house to more freaky stuff." Riesen has many projects up his nicely-creased Swiss sleeves for 2005. Morris Audio will unleash the third volume of the *Club & Home Entertainment* compilation series, plus singles from Duplex 100 and Tom Clark. Citysport fans can catch minimal techno man Todd Bodine's debut album, plus plenty of new artists. "Should be rockin'!" promises Riesen, and we're inclined to believe him. *Tyra Bangs*

www.morrisaudio.com

FREAK SEVEN VS CRITICAL PHASE THE VOICE OF PHASE (MAURICE FULTON RMX) New Religion/BEL/12

It's almost dangerous to be on as much of a roll as Maurice Fulton is these days, because people are going to expect you to constantly amaze them. Luckily, Fulton shows no signs of letting up anytime soon. This remix is bit more straight-ahead than most of the Mu stuff, but that should just make it palatable to a wider variety of audiences. *Alex Posell*

DEETRON THE RECUTS PART 2 Phont/GER/12

Three tasty remixes here: Tejada's working of "Silk Cut" beefs up the bass while adding snappy Amen breaks under a chugging tech foundation; Funk D'Void's mix of the same tune is a bit more house/speed garage-y; and Vince Watson's mix of "Evidence" is fast and soulful, sounding as if it escaped from Derrick May's box when nobody was looking. Worth hunting down. *Alex Posell*

UNIT 4 BODY DUB Clone/NETH/12

This is a solid 12" in the tech-electro vein. While all three cuts are decent, and won't necessarily empty your average techno dancefloor, it's the third track that is the definite standout. Adding a healthy dose of bleep and a dash of pop to an otherwise predictable mix, "Bangkok Impact" has the potential to cross boundaries and see play in a wide variety of scenes. *Alex Posell*

KAN SHINOMURA/RENNIE FOSTER FAMILY UNITS Futago/JPN/12

Tribal used to mean artists like Bandulu, Shake, Derrick May, and The Advent—artists that programmed serious African polyrhythms into machine code. Japan's Futago Tracks and Rennie Foster (with Kan Shinomura) carry on this tradition with a foursome of driving tracks that corral kalimbas, gourd shakers, and melodic drones with shifting hi-hat accents and subtle percolating synths. No clichés, just intricately programmed, rock-solid techno. *Tomas*

DJ BONE LONGEVITY EP 3 Subject Detroit/US/10 BRAZALIEN Subject Detroit/US/12

The exceptionally prolific DJ Bone follows his clanging, metallic anti-war anthem "Body Bags" with two new singles. His third 10" release in the "Longevity" series features two tracks that respectively delve into Detroit's melodic techno ("Take It Back") and booty-bass ("The Freak") traditions, each with an original, percussive twist. Another single on 12" format, "Brazalien," takes the spirit of Sao Paulo's drum orchestras into the D's subterranean world of haunted synths and tinted-window SUV rhythms. If lush arrangements with incessant beats are your thing, Bone is your connection. *Tomas*

HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: I.EMERGE



It's not cool to come in second—unless, like I.Emerge, you're the second person to ever hold world titles in the DMC Championship, the International Turntablist Federation scratch battle, and the Vestax World Finals...then it's pretty cool. I.Emerge—or Merge, as he's known to friends—splits his time between chilling in Miami and repping in New York with his boys (and girl) in NYC's legendary turntablist coalition, the 5th Platoon crew. Merge had a tough time naming his favorite jams, but he came up with these two new-school classics from the crate. *Vivian Host*
www.5thplatoon.com

PETE ROCK & CL SMOOTH APPRECIATE (ILLMIND RMX) white/US/12
Illmind, up-and-coming producer of the Organic Thoughts crew out of New Jerus, does this remix. The tone of the original feels a little off, where the remix hits the nail on the head. Illmind starts off with a nice build up and begins to create the perfect atmosphere for the lyrics to resonate. The sampled hook then drops and the mood is laid down thick and with much more depth than the original. The tone is very uplifting, giving the listener that "never give up hope" feel, and when CL proceeds to handle business, it's game, set, match. *I.Emerge*

NAS FEAT. AZ SERIOUS white/US/12
This joint has been out for a minute, circulating on mixtapes and receiving some decent radio light, but nowhere near the shine it deserves. Originally dropping on *The Prophecy* mixtape, this was slated appear on the new album but didn't make it. With this track, Nas and AZ continue their legacy, banging out without a question their tightest collabo since the *Illmatic* days. There are no loose ends here—the production, lyrics, hook, rhyme scheme, flow are all murdered. The chemistry between the two emcees is fire, which is why it gets the "classic" stamp of approval. *I.Emerge*

COUNT BASS D DOWN EASY Ramp/US/10

The lead single off CBD's excellent fourth album, *Begborrowsteel*, "Down Easy" is a deliciously mellow number that begins with a dusty reggae intro before morphing into a smoothed-out heartache jam. Soft kicks and tender guitars lay the foundation for the Count's laid-back singing, a casual style that sounds like a less bugged-out Dudley Perkins. *Brolin Winning*

RODAN WITCHCRAFT II QuaCzar/US/12

A New York emcee best known for his work with Monsta Island Czars and MF Doom, Rodan follows up *Theophany*, his impressive solo debut, with this three-song single. "Witchcraft II" sports a plodding beat and menacing electro spasms, topped with ultra-dense, chorus-less flows. "Ruler Of Day And Night" finds him spitting swift bravado over a mellow Doom track very similar to Brainsick's "Swerving To The Music," while the DJ.Y.S.-produced "Mineral Kingdom" booms with raw drums, horn loops, and weird dialogue clips. *Brolin Winning*

SHORTIE NO MASS LIKE THIS TrackTeam/US/12

After a star turn on De La's *Buhloone Mind State*, Shortie No Mass seemed destined to blow up. Then she quietly faded away. Now, 12 years later, we get this top-notch single (originally recorded at D&D circa '95). Rockwilder

gives her a chunky, bass-heavy beat for the re-introductory anthem "Like This," while Da Beatminerz bring the heat on "U Like My Style" (original and remix), flipping jazzy pianos and thumping drums. Shortie is just a dope rapper, plain and simple. *Brolin Winning*

CHANNEL LIVE MR. PRESIDENT Brick/US/12

Hard to believe it's been a decade since Channel Live dropped their classic single "Mad Izm" with KRS. Despite such a grand debut, they've been pretty much MIA since then, occasionally resurfacing to the collective shrugs of listeners. Their latest comeback attempt is a decent string-propelled jam shitting on Bush, but the kiddie chorus is kind of corny, and the B-side is just terrible. *Brolin Winning*

EDO G BOSTON Fatbeats/US/12

Edo G has been making a lot of noise in the underground lately, but he's now poised to make a major comeback. His classic flow is as strong as ever, but this time he's backed by Pete Rock beats on both sides of the 12. The A-side is an ode to his hometown and he describes Boston's grittiness as no one else can. On "Stop Dat," he's joined by fellow Beantowners Krumbnsnatcha and Jaysaun over a sparse track highlighted by strong rhymes and roughly harmonized hooks. *Ross Hogg*

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**BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS:
EVIL NINE**

From Brighton, UK, the home of multiple breaks heads of different stripes (Fatboy Slim, Stakka & Skyenet, Amon Tobin) comes the shadowy duo known as Evil Nine. Since 1998, Tom Beaufooy and Pat Pardy—who look vastly different than the cartoon alter egos this illustration depicts—have been creating big, nasty breaks tunes that borrow from chunky house, electro, and hip-hop without becoming too dark or too cheesy. They made their name with singles like “Less Stress” and “Cakehole” before dropping their full-length, *You Can Be Special Too*, for Adam Freeland’s Marine Parade label. Hours before jetting off to a tour of Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, Pardy (known here as Evil Pat) peered in his DJ bag and jotted down some thoughts on three hot new twelves. *Saffron Reeves*
www.evilnine.org

THE PRODIGY SPITFIRE (FUTURE FUNK SQUAD REMIX) XL/UK/12

The original “Spitfire” is one of the standout tracks on the excellent new Prodigy album and has been lovingly twisted here by Future Funk Squad into an acid-vibed Evil Nine favorite. With an insistent and blippy synth line, Eastern vocals, and huge guitar drops, it’s been spinning round our heads for ages. Please stop now. *Evil Pat*

B.L.I.M. THE SOUND IN MY HEAD Track/UK/12

B.L.I.M. has been creating great tracks since way back and hasn’t let us down this time either with this bit of techobreaks on his Track label. It’s pretty damn dark and stomping with super stripped-back beats and a bassline that just rumbles and rumbles and drives people insane (in a good way). *Evil Pat*

LA LIGA WHAT YOU WANT Lot49/UK/12

Although not one of Lot49’s strongest releases, “What You Want” is still a worthy contender. It’s not gonna win any awards for originality but its mix of clean-but-live-sounding drums and chugging synthlines has found a place in our hearts. Not a peak-time moment, but not all tracks have to be. *Evil Pat*



**HOUSEBREAKERS FEAT. THE RAGGA TWINS
JUMP ON IT
Rat/UK/12
DJ QUEST & ODISSI WORMHOLE
Hardcore Beats/UK/12**

The Ragga Twins’ high-speed chat dominates the main mix of the new Rat release; for less lyrical oppression, flip to the Breakerz mix, a great DJ tool that mashes up important breakdance anthems over updated beats. Those who like to take it darker are advised to check DJ Quest and Odissi’s “Wormhole” on sister label Hardcore Beats. Like the Ed Rush & Optical release of the same name, this twelver’s got tech-step breaks, withdrawal-symptom synth stabs, and robotic touches—but closer to 130 than 170. *Star Eyes*

**WONDER FEAT. KANO WHAT HAVE U DONE?
New Era/UK/12**

Wonder follows up his bassbin-melting anthem “What?” with this anticipated production featuring Kano of Nasty Crew on vocals. Kano is fed up with the missus! Wonder fills in the details with his trademark stilted half-time beats and a mournful synth riff, then summarizes with the slowed-down R&B wail of the hook. Owes as much to the RZA as to Wiley. *Cooper*

**SLK FEAT. WONDERKID HYPE HYPE
Social Circles/UK/12**

Superproducer Sticky conspires with Northwest London crew SLK to blow up the dance! The SLK MCs bang out lyrics full of grunts and yelps like they’re having a blast trying to keep up with Sticky’s merry-go-round organs and itchy beats. Keep your ears pricked for the Wonder remix signed to Ministry of Sound. *Cooper*

**DJ DINESH & KID DELI EGYPT
Goldspot/US/12**

For the last six years, New Yorker DJ Dinesh has been working hard for UK garage and its dub, house, and

electro hybrids at his clubs Heat and Drive By, and on solo productions with his mate from across the pond, Kid Deli. Here the duo employs a dub ‘n’ flutes formula on “Egypt” with Arabic vocal samples and severely gyrating subbass. Other cuts explore Big Apple disco-punk and dubstep rubs of D-wall-style dancehall. If ya’ can’t stand the heat... *Tomas*

**J SWEET FEAT. D DOUBLE E AND SARA
BURNING UP
Sweet Beats/UK/12**

J Sweet flips the script and comes up a winner. No rugged bassline. No gun talk. Xylophones! It’s a sweet and simple garage/R&B tune that makes me wish it was warm out here. Several of the big producers are smoothing out their sound this year, so consider this your surprise summer day in March. *Cooper*

**HI-8 OPEN YOUR EYES
Re:Connect/UK/12**

A high-energy breaks 12” for your next rave or Burning Man sunset session. “Open Your Eyes” sounds like 10 Slinkys going up and down the stairs—all synths and bass scaling up and down. “Thru Time” is for the kids, a ravey bit with scissor synths and a female vocal breakdown that hovers then falls into the cheesy pit. *Star Eyes*

**LOW DEEP STR8 FLUSH
Colourful State/UK/12**

Low Deep pastes together plucked strings from MJ Cole, a cut-up vocal from Kanye West, rugged jungle drums, and a surprising hardcore piano to make a two-tracker that stands equally well as MC backing and history lesson. It’s like a megamix of all the sounds that influence UK garage—yet this record manages to be both cohesive and compelling. *Cooper*

**LOBUDG D-TOWN
Sober/US/12**

The past three years have seen nu-skoool breaks embrace its Berlin and Detroit electro past head-on, with everyone from pioneer Afrika Bambaataa to Rennie Pilgrim coating their beats in a synthetic ‘80s gloss. This debut from Sober Records nods in that direction on its two mixes of “D-Town,” where shades of Gap Band and Cybotron lurk in the background, but the foreground belongs to enormous, compressed, and neck-snapping modern breakbeats. Peak-time biznezz. *Jimmy V*

**BLOTNIK BROTHERS MUSEFUL REVOLUTION
EXZAKT SECOND WAVE
Satamile/US/12**

Hail Satamile for being America’s most experienced, consistent, and qualified electro and breakbeat label. They look beyond our shores for gems like Sweden’s Blotnik Brothers, whose four tracks are nostalgic for YMO and Egyptian Lover but haul technofunk into this century. And Florida’s Exzakt are indeed as knife-sharp as any UK act (B.L.I.M., Vex’d, etc), but they opt for a strobe-light breakdance beats EP that’ll sound great in the cavernous halls of a disused grain factory. *Derek Grey*

**DANNY MCMILLAN
ALL ABOUT THE RHYTHM
In-Flight/UK/12**

Look out! When veteran Danny Mac gets on the hypnotic, melodic breaks tip, he’s pulling out all the stops. Expect analog pads, rapturous gospel-preacher samples, arpeggiating synths, and over-driven effects layered in a track that’ll inspire crazy visions to pop out of the intellibeams. The bonus on this single is Danny-gone-dub on “Roots Control.” It’s Jamaican breaks with plenty of English acid funk in the mix. *DJ Dark One*



**TBA
Annulé
CD**

Tusia Beridze, a 25 year old female music producer from Tbilisi/Georgia, returns with her second album on **Thomas Brinkmann’s** max.Ernst label. Electronica that chooses subtlety and nuance over excess and overstatement, her gentle, interweaving electric piano and synth melodies dance about against a textured rhythmic base of clicks and static, creating a distinguished recording that never fails to charm. (max.Ernst)



**Various Artists
Camping
CD**

How do you congratulate yourself for the magic 100 mark, if you are too young and agile for a sapient retrospective? BPitch Control shows you how! They connect past, present and future with the launch of a new compilation series called “Camping”. 20 tracks present the work of the last 5 years of the Berlin-based label. Featuring: **Ellen Allien, Smash TV, Kiki, Sylvie Marks & Hal9000, Modeslektor** and many more... (Bpitch Control)



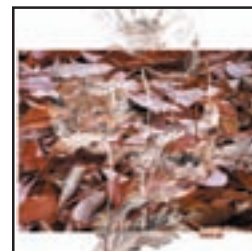
**AGF/DELAY
Explode Baby
CD**

AGF aka **Antye Greie** (Germany) & **Vladislav Delay** (Finland) release their first full length collaboration album. A dialogue between a drummer and a vocalist. Subtle suggestions. Definite expressions. Silent explosions.



**Various Artists
Monika Force
CD**

Tender, mysterious, playful, flirtatious, adventurous - “Monika Force” is the best and the rarest of the Monika sound, including: **Aghani all-girl Burka Band, Cobra Killer, Barbara Morgenstern** remixed by **Dntel, Masha Orella** and many more - plus bonus video!!! Midprice label compilation CD.

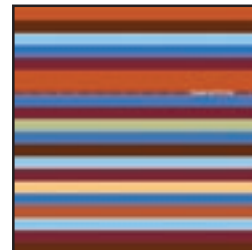


**Marsen Jules
Herbstlaub
CD/LP**

With “Herbstlaub” (Autumn Leaves) Marsen Jules establishes himself as the new hope of neo-classical electronic music. The story started by Wolfgang Voigt’s “Gas” now receives the long waited for update by Jules’ deep, haunting perfection. (City Centre Offices)

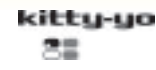


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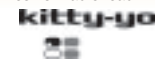
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**Maximilian Hecker
Lady Sleep
CD/2LP**

Hecker’s third longplayer isn’t any less emotional than “Infinite Love Songs” or “Rose”, just simply more relaxed and clasped by retention. It presents eleven puristic songs which pour a comforting clarity and pleasant embrace. Intimacy on a higher level. Maxi Hecker goes **Sigur Rós** vs. **Radiohead**.



**Various Artists
Teeth
CD/LP**

Statler & Waldorf asked a selection of electronic acts like **Tilliander, System, Pellarin** and **Melk** for their version of hiphop. This all-exclusive compilation ranges from dubby electronica to edgy glitches. Oh, and of course some prime hiphop tunes.



**Alog
Miniatures
CD**

Excellent third album from the duo described as “setting new standards in contemporary music” (The Milkfactory) and “one of modern music’s most interesting groups” (BBC Online). Inventive and intriguing electronica with a human and organic nerve.



**Various Artists
SPIRE Live at St. Pierre
Cathedral, Geneva 5th
September
2CD**

The second release in the Spire series of ‘organ works past, present & future’. The dynamism of the event, which required the audience to be rotated between 3 separate venues within the Cathedral precinct in Geneva, is reflected by **Charles Matthews and Marcus Davidson** on the main organ [4 manifolds, computer operated] and in the individual recordings: **Philip Jeck** goes heavy metal in the crypt, **BJNielsen** comes over all moody in the side chapel and **Fennesz** soothes and seduces in the same place.



**Various Artists
An Anthology of Noise &
Electronic Music Volume 3
2CD**

Third volume in this critically acclaimed anthology series further illustrates the many aspects of electronic music from 1952 to 2004. More than two and half hours of rare and unpublished work, plus a forty page booklet, featuring **Bernard Parmegiani, Peter Rehberg, Ilhan Mimaroglu, Michel Chion, Carsten Nicolai, Michael Rother, Asmus Tietchens, Erkki Kurenniemi, Masami Akita, Faust, To Rococo Rot, Günther Rabi, Hugh Le Caine, Michael J. Schumacher** and many others. (Sub Rosa)



**DRUM & BASS
GUEST REVIEWS:
TACTILE CREW**



Bratwa (left) and SKC

Drum & bass and Eastern Europe are not synonymous yet, but they will be soon. Estonia has a runnin' darkcore scene, Czechoslovakia boasts a number of up 'n' coming producers, and let's not forget Budapest, Hungary, home to the rising stars of the Tactile Crew. Helmed by producer SKC and Chris.Su—backed up by established local DJs Safair, Longman, and Bratwa—Tactile touches on a number of styles, from mutant deep dancefloor tearouts to soulful vibes. Commercial Suicide, Timeless, Hospital, Good Looking, Soul:R, and DSCI4 have all taken notice and released a steady stream of tunes from these talents. We pinned down SKC and Bratwa and got the goods on what they're dropping on Hungarian heads. *Star Eyes* www.dsci4.com

SEBA & LENK FEAT. ROBERT MANOS EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF
Bassbin/IRE/12

Forthcoming on the *Rare Grooves* album on Bassbin, Seba and Lenk provide another sublime cut featuring the rambling, hypnotic vocals and "stream of consciousness" spoken word of Robert Manos complemented by scattered breaks and punchy bass stabs. Guaranteed to take the listener on a tumbling ride of lush atmospheric. *TC*

SHOLTO THE SLEEPER (SILENT WITNESS & BREAK RMX) Pollen/US/12

Well-known for quality releases on their Dnaudio imprint, Silent Witness & Break turn out a mesmerizing remix for downtempo artist Sholto. This track manages to maintain a perfect balance of melody and dancefloor aesthetics, with organ harmonics and running beats snugly wrapped in a tight bassline to create a richly textured rollout. *TC*

COMMIX N'DISCO Liquid V/UK/12

The Cambridge triumvirate of bongo 'n' bass unleashes another slice of their recognizable sound. "N'Disco" displays their brighter side with jazzy influences, vocal snippets, and a catchy vibraphone riff easing up the pressure of their trademark beats which roll out relentlessly from start to finish. "Turn It Around" goes deeper as the subbass and hypnotic percussion take control—a valuable DJ tool for the dub-minded. *TC*

BREAKAGE STAGGERED DUB
Critical/UK/12

Critical continues to push the dub and bass vibes with Breakage's "Staggered Dub," which swings with gruff DJ vocal chants, Dillinja-esque bass quakes, and rough Amen edits propelling you to stomp. The flip, "4 Me," is a less abrasive tune led by a combination of the Scorpio break and syncopated bongo hits; a minimal and subliminal roller. *Ryan Romana*

TOTAL SCIENCE DEFCOM 69
Metalheadz Platinum/UK/12

"Defcom 69" begins with a Total Science specialty—washy melodic keyboards that tingle the spine. 909 claps and toms keep the rhythm before a spoken word-style female vocal yields the drop—a complete 180! Loud and hard rave stabs puncture the atmosphere, bringing absolute devastation. Don't sleep on "Loose Ends"—a melodic roller with Reece bass undertones—use it to embark on a journey while keeping the dancefloor edge. *4Real*

MATHEMATICS JAZZ
Social Studies/US/12

Mathematics has definitely established a fine balance between soulful funk and edgy techness, a quality that has made their tunes feel at home with a wide spectrum of DJs. "Jazz" is no exception as it drives through distorted Rhodes and a rollercoaster-moving bassline. Check the flip, "Sphinx," where the bass sounds fall into a deep abyss. *Ryan Romana*

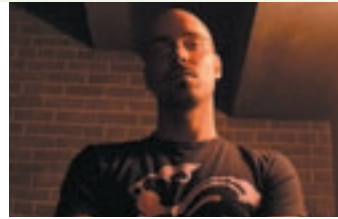
SEBA & PARADOX HOLD ON
Hospital/UK/12
ASC BLACK STEEL
Make:Shift/CAN/12

Rising out of the ashes of atmospheric d&b are two sets of producers representing both the old guard and next generation. The champion team-up of Seba & Paradox meshes the best of their powers with crystal-clear, body-impacting breaks and cascading, ephemeral melodies. Toronto's Make:Shift, on the other hand, pushes forward with modern takes on the atmo blueprint, from ASC's avalanche of drums to Wizard's electro futurism. *Mike Battaglia*

JEM THEY (REMIXES)
Crazy Wise/UK/12

In a sharp contrast to the original, Photek's mix intros with '96 darkside choirs and flanged steppers' breaks. Riding over a fat b-line, Jem's vocals become a mantra as breathy atmospheres give the tune depth and momentum. The Cut Chemist mix stays close to the original vibe with big breakbeats, a double bass, and folk guitar. An instrumental mix is included. *4Real*

**FUTURE JAZZ
GUEST REVIEWS:
KARL INJEX**



Atlanta, GA holla! Your boy Karl Injex is standing permanently at the ready with a syringe of new school funk. Scouring record bins for a range of sounds—from West London broken beat to Detroit soul to West Indian vibes—Injex has become a staple of the future jazz scene. With partners Tyler Askew and Gamall Awad, he helms the groundbreaking Rude Movements night at NYC club APT; since 1999, he and Askew have also penned the Transatlantic Audio column in *Straight No Chaser* and dude is also a graphic designer. Keep an eye out for a Japan-only mix-tape dropping soon, but first check out what he's feeling this month. *Vivian Host* www.rudemovements.net

SILHOUETTE BROWN SPREAD THAT Ether/UK/12

When Dego and Kaidi match forces, it's dangerous every time. Add the supreme vocal arrangements of Bembe Segue, along with the singular vocal talents of Deborah Jordan, and you've got something special. This record is as raw and emotive as your favorite Mizell Brothers classic, but with a firm foot in the future. For those left cold by too many tricks and not enough licks, this is the way forward. *KI*

PLATINUM PIED PIPERS VS. SA-RA DEEP INSIDE Puma/US/5x12

Some things just seem to make sense, like this collaboration between Wajeed's PPP and nascent superstars Sa-Ra. Made for inclusion on the ultra-exclusive Puma 5x12 series, "Deep Inside" is a rough and ready slice of future funk, one to bump on the dancefloor as well as in the trunk. Touching down somewhere between Detroit and Hollywood, this one will drop hard at your next yacht party. *KI*

QUASIMOTO GREENERY Stones Throw/US/12

The return of Lord Quasimoto. It only takes 2:36 for Quas to break down the finer points of the weed life. Beats don't come any ruffier, and you know this one will have even the stiffest necks poppin'. For those too young to remember Cheech & Chong, this should fit just right. *KI*

CH3VY FUR COAT, NO KNICKERS
Catskills/UK/12

Husky Rescue's label gifts us this slice of sleazy yet classy Blaxploitation funk whose title captures the vibe perfectly. "Rock Me Mumma" sounds spacious despite densely packed samples while "After Party" is the *fer real* "back to mine" soundtrack to gettin' lit and laid. But it's "83 Functions"—chugging bassline and over-the-top horns that make the EP worthwhile. *Mike Battaglia*

DANIEL VERES/THE PLANETARY GROUP
Cute/SWE/12

Veres puts his accomplished skills to excellent use on three of these four tracks from his Cute imprint from Gonkyburg; they've got a wicked blend of funky grooves and solid instrumentation that will make connoisseurs of '70s jazz fusion proud. The Planetary Group's infectious midtempo contribution with synth-bass and sparse vocal chants is excellent as well. *Velanche*

CONNIE PRICE & THE KEYSTONES WILDFLOWERS
CARLEEN AND THE GROOVERS RIGHT ON
Now Again/US/12

The two most recent Now Again releases explore the difference between having a great beat and having a great song. Connie Price's heavy grooves and thunderous bass juxtapose an inventive and subtle arrangement (muted trumpet,

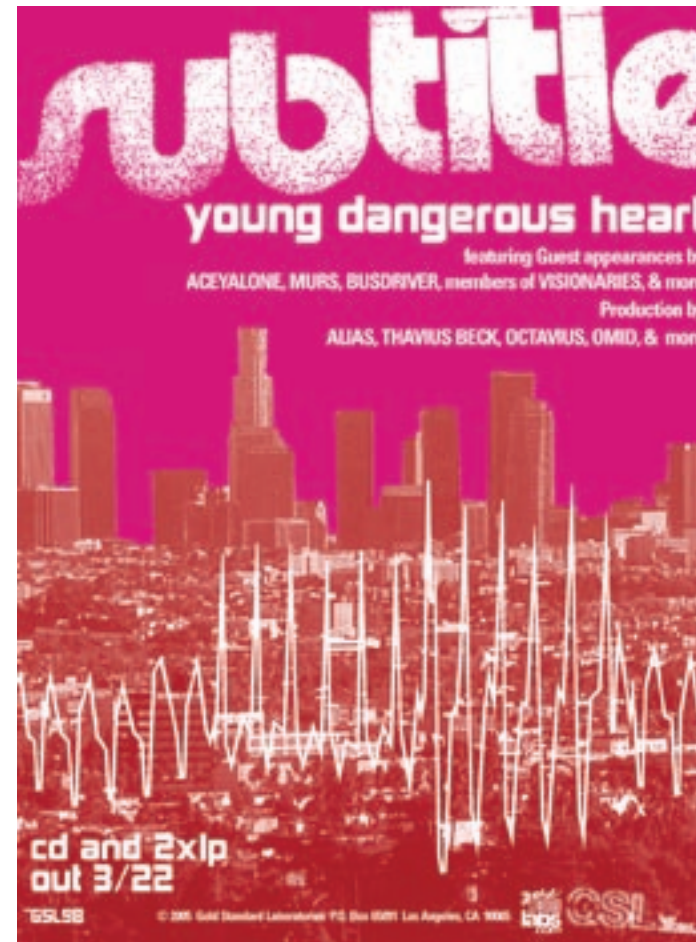
baritone sax, and flute) and a loose yet precise execution of deft songwriting. Conversely, the aptly named Carleen and the Groovers proffers four gritty funk jams of the original dirty south variety, replete with chicken scratch guitar and breaks "sweeter than a mosquito on a match." *Nick Follett*

GOTAN PROJECT LA CRUZ DEL SUR
Ya Basta/FRA/12

The Gotan trio's elegantly delightful tune from its *Inspiracion-Esperacion* comp gets the re-rub treatment, and we're rewarded with some fine remixes. London-based Interference livens the tune with sampled guitar riffs and electro vibes. First Man and David Walters also put in their two cents, respecting the spirit and essence of the original. *Velanche*

JUMBNONICS Tru Thoughts
UK/12

Brighton's downbeat specialists unleash their funky answer to Mr. Scruff's spirited beats or Wagon Christ's oddball funk. Jumbonics assembles mothballed drum samples, squiggly analog basslines, and spacey organ riffs on tracks that'll make you feel like dressing up to get down. The tempos range from bong-hit slow to tap-dance quick with liberal quantities of headphone science. Weighty! *Tomas*



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**LEFTFIELD GUEST
REVIEWS: JD TWITCH**

JD Twitch's music career is as eclectic as what he plays. Hailing from just outside Edinburgh, he spent 10-plus years as a techno DJ, starting Scotland's first techno club, Pure, and releasing records by goth stalwarts Coil and Chris and Cosey. Fed up with the bleep bleep, he started a band called Mount Florida, and released an album on the mighty Matador Records. In November of 1997, he hooked up with Jonnie Wilkes to create Optimo (Espacio), a night at Glasgow's Sub Club where they play everything from Lee Hazlewood to Kompakt to obscure punk-funk. Tigersushi recently chronicled their sound on *How To Kill the DJ Volume 2*, and Twitch has a forthcoming 12" due on Ze Records. The Optimo boys make their US DJ debut this month, and Twitch tells you what you can expect below. *Saffron Reeves*
www.optimo.co.uk, www.tigersushi.com

OUT HUD ONE NIGHT TO LEAVE !K7/GER/12

Out Hud returns after what seems like an age, and a very welcome return it is. The album version of this sees dual female lead vocals but this 12" mix is a very different beast. The first three minutes are what can only be described as demented before it breaks down into a gorgeously languid seven-minute percussive space disco groove with 21st century production twists. Killer. *JDT*

**MORANE LET ME OUT (NO, THERE'S NOBODY IN THE CELLAR)
Perlon/GER/12**

This has been out for a while but has been criminally overlooked. Perlon is usually associated with microhouse but this is something else entirely. I'm going to call this emo disco—it's got a morose singer, disjointed guitars, damaged disco strings, synthetic horns, and a big 4/4 beat. Where this fits in is anyone's guess but I think it's a work of genius. *JDT*

KONONO NO. 1 LUBUAKU Terp/NETH/CD

From Kinshasa, Congo, this lot has been going for 25 years and they build all their own instruments. This is just about the punkest, most primal, trance-inducing music I have ever heard. The fact that this was recorded straight from the mixing desk live in Holland only adds to the rawness. Mindblowing! *JDT*



Optimo: Jonnie Wilkes (left) and JD Twitch

**DEATH FROM ABOVE 1979
ROMANTIC RIGHTS
Last Gang/US/CD**

"Romantic Rights" is a violent piece of maniacal dance-rock; while most similar fusions lean in a punk/post-punk direction, DFA1979 (not to be confused with the Rapture's DFA) takes things a step further by metalizing their mixture. Questionable though this may sound, it actually works. The Alfonzo Falcone mix is the standout, honing the original's edge into a rising tower of force that can literally freak out a dancefloor (this has been hand-tested by the author). Solid. *Alex Posell*

**HIGH PRIEST BOOK OF KEYS
Sound Ink/US/12**

As more time and releases pass since the splintering of Antipop Consortium, what becomes increasingly clear is each member's individuality. While Beans has proven his penchant for b-boy boogie, High Priest's beats are unrelenting and "chopped like Vin Diesel." With verses that have a habit of wrapping upon themselves like sax player Lenny Tristano's phrases, "Book of Keys" goes as far out as any previous Antipop-related record. If you like HP, you'll like this record; if not, your loss. *Nick Follett*

**ROD ALL MY LOVE
Frontend Synthetics/IRE/12**

Boards of Canada, Zero 7, Plaid, Isan: all of them have taken their own unique approaches to slow, dreamy electronic music, with an emphasis on great production and extraordinary beats. Add (the completely lackluster) name Rod Morris to this list; he's put a Guinness keg of thought into his conceptual debut EP. Tracks like "All My Lovers" hold steady, then shift sideways rhythmically amid a flutter of rose petal-sweet melodies. *Tomas*

**HAKAN LIDBO THE WORST CASE SCENARIO
Tendertronic/DEN/12**

I'm happy to announce fearless tech-house producer Hakan Lidbo has lost marbles, at least if this EP is any evidence. "Lonely Clones" duplicates a thousand voice shards per second in your headphones as Bradley tank basslines bore craters in the track's aquamarine surface. "Combat Kittens" is minimal techno, sure—if that also includes extreme left/right-panned clicks and noises or frequencies off the EQ charts. It's a precarious expedition worth taking. *Derek Grey*

**SYCLOPS MOM, THE VIDEO BROKE
Tirk/UK/CD**

"3 mystery musicians" blah blah blah... all you need to know about this single is that Maurice Fulton produced it, so it's most likely going to be a few notches above great. Though not as manic as his usual fare, the trademark live-and-programmed drum mixes are there, as well as the space-age sound effects and Fat Albert basslines. *Alex Posell*

**L'ALTRA BRING ON HAPPINESS
Hefty/US/12**

The best break-up with your boyfriend/girlfriend band has also recently had more line-up changes than the Bush cabinet. But L'Altra ticks on with somber ballads constructed from trad indie-pop elements and heaps of electronic rinse. "Soft Collapse" features the soothing coos of Ms. Lindsay Anderson pasted over wonderful digital symphonies. "Bring On Happiness (Slicker remix)" features John Hughes' best backwards drum tricks and other rhythmic betrayals. This moody music makes me happy. *Alpha Romero*

**TUNDRA/CAPTAIN CAMPION
MACROFUN VOL. 1
Microcosm/US/10
JAMES DIN A4 ALLE MEINE ENDEN
Real Soon/GER/12**

Tundra (New York's Morgan Packard and Brett Cleaver) and Captain Campion's contributions to Microcosm's split 10" establish the label as an international cousin to labels like Leaf, Lo, Al, and Type—where electro-acoustic, ambient, glitch, and IDM take on emotional lives outside their terse definitions. In particular, Campion's pastoral piece brings folk and ambient together in a waterfall of sounds. Similarly, Germany's James Din A4 opts for meaningful sonic explorations on his minimal techno EP, managing five completely unique concoctions replete with skidding, chirping rhythms and jellyfish-translucent melodies. *Edward Worth*

**MAHLON STEWART DEM GIRLS
Red Bud/US/12
BUTCH CASSIDY SOUND SYSTEM ROCKERS
GALORE
Fenetik/SCOT/7**

Calling all progressive dub and dancehall heads—New York's Red Bud and Scotland's Fenetik deliver the fresh baked biscuits once again! "Dem Girls" arrives with Mahlon Stewart's (Roman Stewart's offspring) *criss* singjay vocals (reminds me of Notch or Wayne Wonder) and solid production from Danish Stereo Deluxe signee Emo, Germany's Al-Haca, and Brooklyn's Apeanaut. No lie—every version here is hotter than the front row at Sting. Likewise, BCSS is that hidden diamond that folks is seriously sleeping on—this 45 will dub the foundations to the ground. "Rockers Galore" is the best of old and new school in one mix. *Tomas*

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12" Remixes of Mahlon Stewart's "Dem Girls" from Emo, Apeanaut & Al-Haca Soundsystem
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of "Go Away", featuring Diana Blau, Tomas of XLR8R said it is "like a holy mix of UK artists G-cop and Spacer. Gallant."

SPRING 2005
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overtones
"give it again" 12"
featuring remix by inverse cinematiks

"War Games" 7" b/w "One More Dub" by Apeanaut
"This sounds like the Bee Gees covering 'Dirty Mind' era Prince in Dub. Fucking amazing and I can't stop playing it. Don't sleep on 'One More Dub' either." — Top One, XLR8R

"Chosen One" 7" by Rob Symeon. Produced by Takkah
"...takes you back to Kingston circa 1974; his pure, easy vocals are perfectly suited to the Augustus Pablo-inspired track, and in classic dub fashion, its *spalide* is beautifully understated." — Ross Hogg, XLR8R
Dub version can be heard on J.Boogie's Dubtronic Science from Om Records

"Dem Girls" 7" by Mahlon Stewart. Produced by Chius
"The nephew of Tings comes with an infectious and energetic sing-jay hook over Chius' genre-bending rhythms, with reemerging Zege dropping a rah-rah verse in for contrast. The version easily stands on its own as a dirty electro-riff, with 808 booms and squelchy bass ready to wreck bass cabinets." — Monk One

Redbud Dub 2 7" feat. Shikky Vikky & 33Hz vs. Victor Rice
"pure throwback to the heyday of Lee Perry and King Tubby. This ode to the roots of Jamaican drum and bass is quite a welcome homage." — Jah Cousteau, REUP

www.redbudrecords.com



LUCKY 13
BY TOPH ONE

Maybe it's the cold and rainy winter, but I'm really getting into the right music for the season this year. Like how milk tastes perfect with that re-heated pizza, *especially* if it's out of that tall plastic mug that balances the cold of the milk against the heat of the pizza to create a truly holy little experience right there, on the couch, as *The Simpsons* play just for you. That's my kind of Zen, right there. This is a mellow, soulful "Lucky 13" for ya, a slight reprieve from the usual party-bangers. Slow down, like Brand Nubian, and listen to the music like the Doobie Brothers.

1) ETHNIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE "ANCESTRAL SONG" (Deeper Soul/UK/12) Like a missing outtake from "Kulu Se Mama" by St. John Coltrane, this beautiful gem floats above the bullshit of everyday life and cannot fail to warm the heart. Osunlade and Kenmit Sources add the deep house beats on the A-side.

2) PETE SAMPLES "UNSENT LETTERS" (Vinyl Republik/CAN/12EP) Talented young cat from Winnipeg, Canada, this instrumental EP calls to mind early Mo'Wax with songs like "Phlegmatic" and "Lady Luck," but my choice is the warped, indie rock guitars of "Awkward Goodbye," with more than a slight nod to DJ Shadow.

3) V/A "REWORKED 3" (white/US/EP) Not your average bootleg—here we have bangers from The Roots, Fugees, Alkaholiks, and D'Angelo remixed by the LA underground's Nobody, Presto, Mum's the Word, Skavenger, and more. Smooove.

4) TETRIS "TWO HOURS" (Eighth Dimention/US/12) Moscow's Tetris gets the remix treatment from Q-Burns Abstract Message, but man—the original here is smoking! Sexy, jazzed-up spacefunk capable of moving any style of dancefloor. Shots of vodka for my new Russian friends!

5) OPIO TRIANGULATION STATION (Hiero Imperium/US/LP) I suppose there might be some folks out there for whom the Hieroglyphics crew means nothing, but those people are subhuman morons who don't count. This is vintage Hiero from one quarter of the Souls of Mischief, and it's on point as always. From the lead off "Viva Main Vein!!" to "Take My Chances" to the slamming "Confederate Burning" featuring Casual, Rasco, and Roc Raida, Opio comes rough, insightful, and correct.

6) PAL JOEY "SHOW ME FEAT. KEMDI" (Loop D'Loop/US/12EP) Man, San Francisco is so fucking stupid sometimes. *Every* other town I've ever gone to is open to hearing both hip-hop and house in the same room, by the same DJ, often within the same 10 minutes. Not here. Everything's gotta be all *segregated* and shit. Fuck you, stupid people! The world needs more King Britt. The world needs to go to Proper in LA. And most definitely, everybody needs more Pal Joey in their lives. Word.

7) RAW PRODUCE "THE WACK MC" (Female Fun/US/12) Once again, I find myself on the B-side, eating up "Mr. Dope America"—all horns and breaks and samples cut in, while Raw Produce flows over it like some sort of New England Pharcyde. Dope indeed.

8) CHANNEL LIVE "MR. PRESIDENT" (Brick/US/12) You need to know this: Channel Live is back, and tough as ever + they're taking on Thief Bush = you need this. Done deal.

9) BARFLY "STREET TALK EP" (Rong/US/12EP) Antonio Garlic and Ben Cook smash a homer with their drunken disco-acid heat, and Rong Records is still batting 1000, good lord. Music to pound beers to at the bar or have dirty sex standing up in the kitchen at your place to.

10) COUNT BASS D "HOLDIN' ON" (Ramp/GER/10) This would be the non-LP B-side of "Down Easy" from Bass D's jazz-laced *BegBorrowSteal* full-length, and it's a hypnotic little joint with the Count singing a breathy lament as the loping beat jerks along and keeps the head nodding.

11) UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT "THINK HARD FEAT. DECLAIME" (Track Team/US/12) Similar to #6, there are dummies out there who think every track you play throughout the night should be Pharaoh Monch or Cypress Hill or Jay-Z. Not so. You could drop this in your set and I wouldn't complain. Plus I just love Dudley Perkins.

12) DOSS REXX "DEEP SEA RIDDIM" (demo/US/CD) Man, keep your ears open for Laser Gun Sound and their dubplate specialties. Bounty Killer and Capleton over Led Zepplin breaks? Hells yes!

LUCKY 13) SOUNDZ OF SPIRIT (Jog9/US/DVD) This film from 25-year-old Joslyn Rose Lyons is a journey into the spirituality and creative process of hip-hop culture, complete with interviews and performances by KRS-1, Q-Bert, Aceyalone, Common, Saul Williams, and a grip of others. A beautiful, well-rounded debut.

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at www.fabric8.com/redwine.



BLAST ZONE
DJ ENKI



Hip-hop quips, quacks, and snaps, plus tasty crate treats.

Man, is it March already? I just now woke up from New Year's Eve! I guess that's what being on hip-hop time is all about: being three months behind and possibly in a long-term stupor. Quick word of advice: Red Bull and naphtha are not "two great tastes that taste great together," no matter what the bartender says. I presently look, sound, and feel like a post-bender Krusty the Clown. But still, in gazing over the wreckage from 2004 and the spillover into 2005, I feel pretty good about these five predictions for the coming months:

1. Lil' Jon will release his new album, *Are You People Really Dumb Enough to Buy This?* Lots of people prove to be dumb enough to buy it.

2. George Bush will choke on his falafel. Dick Cheney's Heimlich will gain him the Congressional Medal of Honor, a Bronze Star, and an Iron Cross. Bush will award himself a Purple Heart. Bush will also interpret his gagging on Middle Eastern food as a terrorist attack and invade Iran, Syria, Brunei, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and, fuck it, China.

3. I will start a brilliant new reality TV show called *Clean My Apartment*. The obligatory follow-up, *Celebrity Clean My Apartment*, will give the viewing public the perverse pleasure of seeing suck-ass Gwyneth Paltrow scouring my bathtub while I berate her for doing a shitty job.

4. Madlib will release an album of beats made by slapping random buttons on his drum machine. The "we love hip-hop...from a comfortable theoretical distance" media will stroke itself to orgasm over the album's "gritty, low-fi, unquantized brilliance." Pitchfork Media will give it a score of 362 out of 10.

5. *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* will make \$146 million on opening night. Nobody will like the movie at all.

Although my heart lies with great music of the past, it's high time I gave some more recent releases some shine around here. Fellow 1988 enthusiasts fear not—there will still be plenty of time to talk about the Greatest Year in Hip-Hop History. For now, here are my Top Five Hip-Hop Records of the Moment:

X-Clan "The One" (Up Above) Brother J hasn't lost a step when it comes to writing clear, powerful rhymes.

DJ Day "What Planet What Station?" (Milk Crate) A classic Jungle Brothers cut reimagined—and anything that reinvigorates the JB's on the club scene has gotta be good.

Lyrics Born "Do That There" (Quannum Projects) LB's got style for days. A terrific Cut Chemist track meets a brilliantly patterned set of verses.

X-zibit "Hey Now (Mean Muggin)" (Columbia) We'll probably never get the *Speed of Life* raw-dog Xzibit back again. Oh well. But at least he managed to pick up a nice Timbaland track.

E-A-Ski "My Bad" (Infrared Music Group) A certifiable club wrecker here as E-A-Ski makes good on his decade-old promise to hit us off with some powerful cuts.

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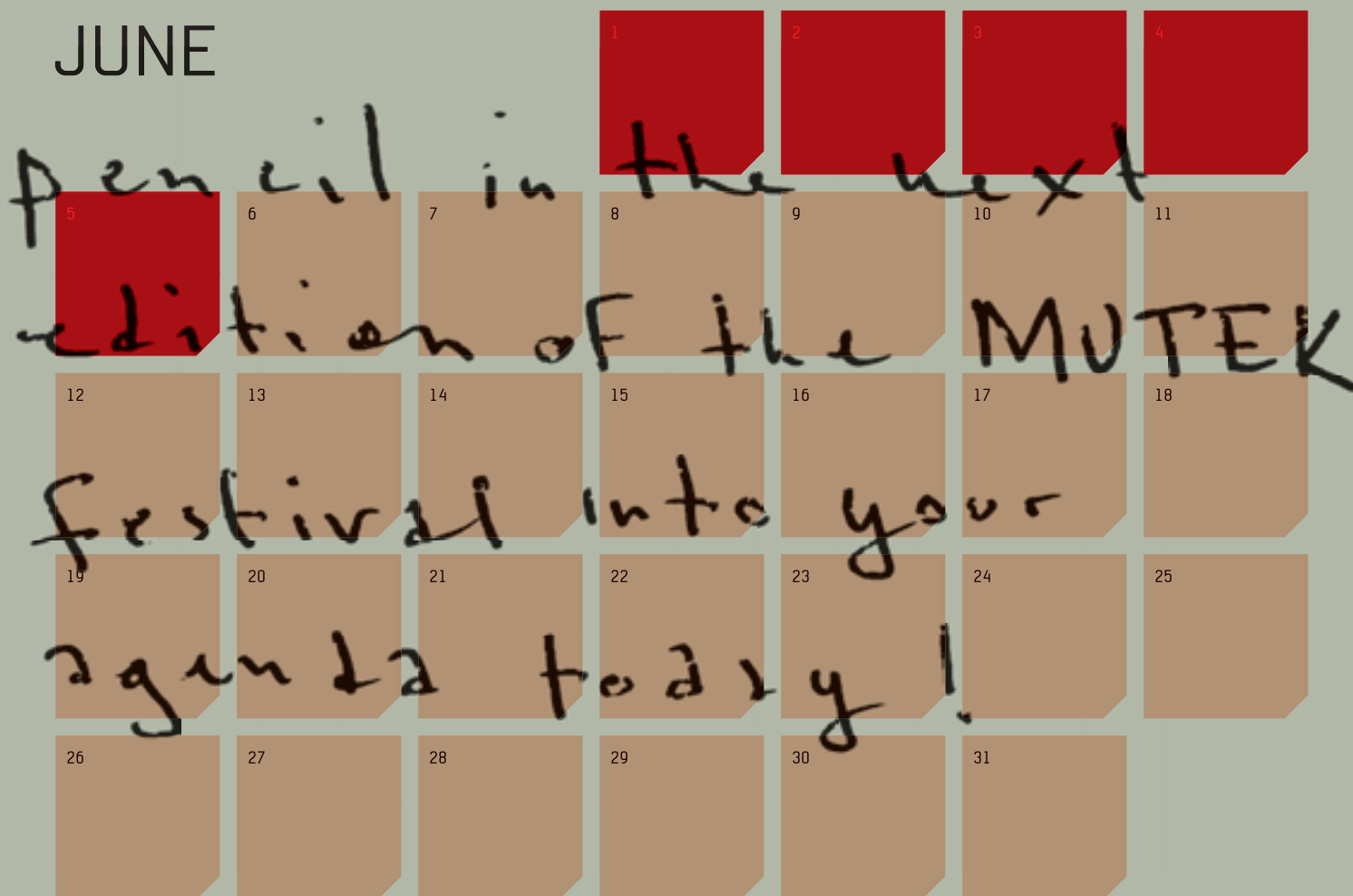
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JUNE



IN THE STUDIO MR. SCRUFF

Manchester native talks about tea, old samplers, and hearing voices.

WORDS: JESSE TERRY PHOTO: NATHAN COX



In Mr. Scruff's studio (top to bottom): Korg MS 2000, Akai MPC 60, E-mu 6400, custom Mr. Scruff teapot



Compared to the standard dark breaks and moody electronic music we're used to, Andy Carthy's deft work behind the 1200s and painstakingly composed beats sound downright happy. On such humorously titled albums as *Trouser Jazz*, the artist known as Mr. Scruff pens odes to dancing and sausages. Amidst the rigors of touring, he's been working on a slew of remixes and preparing for a sequel to 2004's DJ mix *Keep it Solid Steel*. After a whirlwind week of DJ gigs ringing in the New Year, Scruff finally got a chance to relax, sip a cup of tea, and sit down for a chat about what makes his studio tick.

What are the most indispensable pieces of equipment in your studio?

A tea kettle, an [Akai] MPC 60, and the E-mu 6400 sampler. I have a very small studio, and along with that I use the [E-mu] SP-1200. They're both very old pieces of equipment from about 1987. They're both mono. The quality of the sampling on the SP and the MPC is quite low, so any sample you put in there comes out the other end with the sound of that machine. The MPC has a bit more memory, it's a bit more versatile, and the SP is very brutal, very gritty, and it has a great rock solid feel, even though when you analyze it the groove is actually quite wobbly. [The limited sampling rates] help me create a style rather than wallowing around in a laptop that's got unlimited everything and 2,000 plug-ins and every keyboard ever made. I prefer to acquaint myself with two or three bits of equipment that are quite limiting, and just push those and that limit.

Do you have keyboards in your setup?

Well, I only have one keyboard. It's a Korg MS 2000, not the original '70s one but a repro. With my keyboard sounds especially, I will resample stuff and then quite heavily process it in the sampler, or just resample lines that I played live, just to give it a similar feel to the sampled record. Or just to grime it, [I'll] put it through old compressors or EQs, just to give it that warmth, that feel of the music from the '60s and '70s, that

grainy sound quality. It gives it a coat, a slight ambiguity that's difficult to explain but easy to hear.

And you wire your studio differently for each track?

The reason for the different wiring has to do with different machines being in control. If I'm using two or three samplers, then one will be sending the MIDI and handling the sequencing and the others will be following it, depending on whether the main groove is created in the Mac, the MPC, or the SP.

How do you get started making a track?

I don't tend to have a theme or anything when I work on my albums, I just write music and a theme or mood reveals itself. Remixes are quite nice because you already have some definite material to work with and some restrictions, and I generally only remix stuff I already like. I just approach each piece of music individually and try and find out what it's telling me. It's like a conversation between you and the piece of music you're writing, and it's definitely not a one-sided conversation. Every instrument in a record has a voice—whether it's drums, bass, vocals, keys, horns, or random effects, it's all part of a song. As long as something has the requisite amount of light, shade, and contrast then you will find it engaging, the same way you mix ingredients and put a bit of seasoning in your food.

Mr. Scruff Presents Keep It Solid Steel is out now on Ninja Tune. www.ninjatune.net. Find tea kettles and more fun at www.mrscruff.com.



M3RCK ARTIST MACHINE DRUM REVEALS HIS TOP FIVE DRUM SOUND SOURCES

Despite what common sense might lead you to believe, Machine Drum (a.k.a. Travis Stewart) has never really owned a drum machine. If he had, it would certainly be destroyed by now. The man is not kind to his gear. Even his computers have a tendency to get suicidal when faced with the prospect of a lifetime under his merciless abuse. When I talk to him about it, he knows he has a problem. He knows that his destructive impulses keep him from owning nice things like drum machines or software with limited installs.

Within this tragedy I discovered something quite amazing about Machine Drum—he has made a habit of composing all his music using a freeware program called Impulse Tracker. I would have wagered that a tenderly cared for Akai MPC lived under his pillow, or at the very least, a commercial sequencer like Logic or Cubase. Instead, Machine Drum is cranking out the dirtiest, chest-flattening beats you’ve ever heard by using a freeware program that’s equal parts ugly and tedious.

In an age where new software is promoted with the same urgency as erection enhancing drugs, Travis’ reverence for the tried and true is something of an anomaly. By spending less time learning new software and more time thinking about his samples and song structure, Machine Drum is beating his fellow producers by a mile. As evidence that it’s all about what you’re putting into it, not what you’re putting it into, I present you with Machine Drum’s top five sample sources:

1. **Roland TR-808** “I used Rebirth to make acid tapes when it first came out and I never got tired of the bass drum.”
2. **Frame drum** “I love the wide range of sounds that this simple drum can make. Sequencing the sounds allows you to hear inhuman rhythms.”
3. **Old-school demoscene Chiptune drum hits** “Old early- to mid-’90s MOD files made in trackers had to be very low in size, so the samples used were very small. This limitation inspired the most creative and interesting sounding lo-fi trashy drum hits that I still use.”
4. **Tommy Lee drum kit** “The Skittle boys wouldn’t be anything without this essential tool as part of their arsenal!”
5. **Meredith Monk’s voice** “She can do the craziest shit with her vocals and it sounds so amazing matched with electronic music.” *Chachi Jones*

Machine Drum’s Bidnezz is out now on M3rck. www.m3rck.net



1



2



5

APPLE LOGIC PRO 7 STUDIO SOFTWARE

Many artists find themselves 10 years in to the production game and looking for a new challenge; to make the big leap from small studio sequencing software like Ableton Live or Cakewalk Sonar to ProTools or Logic. Well, that battle for your loyalty has started to get more intense. Apple’s new flagship audio/MIDI sequencer **Apple Logic Pro 7** is finally here, and it has a lot of new tricks to spruce up an already spectacular software package. Among the improvements is distributed processing; you can use additional G5s or G4s as ‘nodes.’ This makes Logic a virtually unlimited, expandable system; if you’ve a few extra G5s or G4s cluttering up your garage, you’ll never worry about overloading your CPU with heavy-duty third party Audio Unit plug-ins.

The virtual instrument and effect selection in Logic sounds excellent, with vintage/modern keyboards and synths along with every kind of effect imaginable. Adding to the excellent set of instruments included with Logic are two newcomers; Sculpture, an amazing modeling synthesizer and UltraBeat, a virtual drum machine on steroids.

The Guitar Amp Pro plug-in gives you access to all your favorite guitar amplifiers, inside your computer— forget about mics, just plug your guitar into your audio in/out box and you’re ready to rock. Because Logic is now owned by Apple, it’s an extremely stable application on the Mac, and the CPU load is relatively light due to Altivec optimization. Syncing Logic to video applications like Final Cut Pro is extremely easy.

Due to Logic’s unique terminology, layout and deep scroll-through menus, Logic is dif-



ficult to just install and use; even if you’re well versed in other sequencers, prepare to hit the books for a while before you get the hang of it. That said, if you’re coming from Logic Express or GarageBand, you have a head start. Apple seems quite devoted to their sequence of sequencers and the musical/technical evolution of each. Combined with a G5, Logic Pro 7 can hang with or exceed any recording setup out there if you have the patience to learn it. *Jesse Terry*

LOGIC PRO 7 CAN HANG WITH OR EXCEED ANY RECORDING SETUP OUT THERE.

Apple Logic Pro 7 MSRP: \$999; www.apple.com



iBOOM

For those who lament the triumph of mp3 headphone culture and long for the days of sidewalk ghetto blasting, Digital Lifestyle Outfitters offers a solution. The iBoom encourages one to treat their iPod like a tape or CD, albeit one that contains thousands of songs rather than, say, 12. The iBoom provides more punch than your average pair of portable speakers, and charges the iPod while it’s docked. Also included is an FM radio so that you can... y’know, listen to the radio. *Alex Posell*

Pros: Listen to your entire music library anywhere—and loud!

Cons: Do your neighbors really want to hear your Hootie and the Blowfish collection?

iBoom MSRP: \$149.99; www.diodirect.com



WIZOO VIRTUAL PERCUSSION LIBRARIES

Wizoo has two percussion virtual instruments with an incredible range of regional styles, instruments, rhythmic feels, and spatial placements. The **Latigo** set gives you a massive range of Latin percussion samples to spice up your latest reggaeton floor-fillers and electro-salsa-clash remixes, while **Darbuka** delivers top quality Middle Eastern and Arabic drumming. These aren’t simply single-hit sample libraries; they are fully adjustable performances by members of the Miami Sound Machine (for Latigo) and well-known Arabic percussionists Suat Borazan and Mohamed Zaki (for Darbuka). *Jesse Terry*

Pros: Incredibly variable set of great-sounding percussion.

Cons: At one to two GBs each, they’ll fill up your outdated laptop quick.

Wizoo Darbuka and Latigo Virtual Percussion MSRP: \$299.95 each; www.wizoo.com



GET READY TO MIX SIDEWAYS!

VESTAX PVT E2 PIVOTING TURNTABLE

Hey DJs! Get ready to mix sideways! Though you might not immediately see the need for an angling turntable, the Vestax PVT-e2 has a slew of great features that make it well worth investigating. The small footprint allows for placement in previously inaccessible areas, and uneven or sloped surfaces are no problem. In addition, the development of this idea required Vestax to create what is apparently the world's most powerful anti-skip tone-arm system, a dream for scratch DJs or anyone that plays in bumpy environments (or around drunk people).

The active balanced system uses a special spring to compensate for the change in gravitational force when the platter is touched or angled, so only the most severe amount of stress will actually remove the needle from the groove. Surely it won't be long before the more innovative among battle DJs dream up all kinds of flashy ways to use this little sucker. The steep price will probably dissuade many from picking a pair up, but as club installations they should be a hit in no time. *Alex Posell*

Vestax PVT E2 MSRP: \$1399; www.vestax.com

ROLAND VDRUM V-COMPACT SERIES TD-3S & GR 20 GUITAR SYNTHESIZER

Okay, I know what you're thinking. Guitar synthesizers are almost as dorky as those headless Steinberger guitars from the '80s, and electronic drums are for people less cool than Phil Collins. While I can't deny that I used to own not one but two Steinbergers, having seen the improvements in these units, I will now defend the coolness of a MIDI guitar setup like the Roland GR 20 or a Vdrum V-Compact Series TD-3S drum module set.

The GR-20 looks like a small footboard, and comes with lots of cool internal sounds. If you're last experience was with the slow, high-latency guitar synths of the '80s, prepare to be pleasantly surprised. Attach their unobtrusive pickup to your guitar, plug in, and your strings can play anything from a Fender Rhodes to Zamfir's pan flute, mixing in live guitar at will. Even better, hook it up to your computer and stop pretending you can play keyboard, utilizing the many sounds that Reason or any other virtual instrument in your arsenal has to offer.

As for the drums, if you're tired of neighbors calling the cops because you like to rock out in the middle of the night, worry no more. Roland's kit is one of the dopest electronic setups out there. While it comes with a wealth of realistic acoustic drum sounds, it's the electronic elements and sampling possibilities that make the Vdrums really cool. Imagine taking all the sounds you've collected for Reason or Akai MPC 2000 and being able to play them on demand from an odd looking but natural feeling drum kit. The live dub possibilities are endless—use the internal effects or hook this baby up to your computer and you can use VST plug-ins for crazy delays and reverb. Even cover boy Sly Dunbar uses electronic drums. See, I told you they were cool. *Jesse Terry*

1. Roland Vdrum V-Compact Series TD-3S: \$1095;

2. Roland GR 20 Guitar Synthesizer MSRP: \$695; www.rolandus.com



ELECTRONIC DRUMS ARE FOR PEOPLE LESS COOL THAN PHIL COLLINS.



CIRCULAR LOGIC INTIME SOFTWARE

Circular Logic's InTime software is the solution for syncing your MIDI tracks and audio loops for performance. InTime listens to incoming MIDI signals (or even audio signals if you have an audio to MIDI converter) and generates a tempo for host sequencers like Ableton Live, Reason, and Cubase. In plain-speak, you can make your computer listen to your drummer or guitarist (if they've got MIDI interfaces) and the tempo of your sequencer follows minor fluctuations in groove and rhythm. Wow. *Jesse Terry*

Circular Logic InTime MSRP: \$159; www.circular-logic.com



X2 MEGAVIEW 561 AND MEGA PLAYER 521 SPORT, SAMSUNG YH-999 & YP60V DIGITAL MUSIC PLAYERS

Now that everyone has gotten over the iPod thing, other companies are delivering truly cool competition. For about the same price as one of those photo iPods, you can get an X2 MegaView 561 or Samsung Yh-999 multi-media player, both of which hold 20 gigabytes of storage and can show images, play video on a small screen, play MP3s, and a whole lot more. The X2 MegaView 561 can even record voice to document your next poetry slam event.

For all the athletes out there, X2's Mega Player 521 Sport and Samsung's YP-60V could be the answer. Both players have a modest amount of storage (256 MB for the YP-60V and up to 1 GB for the Mega Player 521), but because the memory is flash-based, you can jog around all you want without fear of skipping MP3s. Both have FM tuners, arm bands, calorie counters, and heart rate monitors to manage your next workout or methamphetamine binge, and the Mega Player can also record voice or FM radio. *Jesse Terry*

1. X2 MegaView 561 MSRP: \$399;

2. X2 Mega Player 521 Sport MSRP: \$179; www.x2usa.com

3. Samsung YH-999 MSRP: \$499.99;

4. Samsung YP-60V MSRP: \$199.99; www.samsung.com



BECAUSE THE MEMORY IS FLASH-BASED, YOU CAN JOG AROUND ALL YOU WANT WITHOUT FEAR OF SKIPPING MP3S.



M-AUDIO STUDIO PACK DELUXE

Don't be dumb! Save your back now while you have your youth. The Studio Pack Deluxe looks just like wheely luggage, except that it's designed for you, the touring electronic musician. It includes pockets for a laptop and controller (the M-Audio M-Audio Ozone or Oxygen8 fit especially well) and also headphones, a CD wallet, pens, cords, and a MIDI interface. Studio Pack comes with backpack straps as well as a retractable handle. *Tomas Palermo*

Pros: Tons of pockets and super-sturdy design.

Cons: You have to balance it with your other rolling bags!

M-Audio Studio Pack Deluxe MSRP: \$129; www.m-audio.com



POWER TOOLS FOR GARAGEBAND

At this year's Mac World in SF, Steve Jobs hauled Grammy hack John Mayer on stage to play live music into the new version of GarageBand. The music was cringe-worthy, but the software program's capabilities are not. This is especially true when you know the shortcuts, memory-savers, and enhancement tips you'll find in Backbeat Books' latest essential tutorial book. It doesn't cover the basics of using GarageBand, but it does expand your understanding of working with MIDI instruments, loops, quantization, and built-in effects. An accompanying CD loads you up with extra plug-ins, helper apps, and loops. *Tomas Palermo*

Pros: In-depth tips and a CD packed with samples and tools.

Cons: Doesn't include beginners lessons, assumes you have a powerful computer.

Power Tools For GarageBand MSRP: \$17.95; www.backbeatbooks.com

VIS-ED: CRAIG METZGER

New York's board-certified genius goes from sketches to skateboards to Instant Winner.

WORDS: CARLETON CURTIS IMAGES: CRAIG METZGER



The staggeringly bold silhouettes and graphical shape shifters Craig Metzger creates should merit arrogance. So perhaps it's the skateboarder in him that keeps him so grounded...or maybe it's just the crippling insecurities. Uncomfortable with his drawing abilities, Metzger attributes any success to mere will. And upon completion of this interview, Metzger squirmed. "Hopefully I didn't sound like an idiot," he worried, rather charmingly.

Metzger lived the bulk of his life in the crowded NYC art market, so it's no wonder he's anxious. The cruel gallery world offered little help at times, so Metzger supplemented his art designing for clients like Etnies, Jack Spade, and Burton. Niche art magazines like *Arkitip* and *B+W* also began to take notice.

After a series of small victories with corporate clients Matador Records, Nike, and MTV, Metzger returned whole hog to his skateboarding roots in the summer of 2004. Disgusted by board companies' increasingly corporate interests, he launched Instant Winner, a brand that brought skateboarding back to its close-knit roots.

Helmed by former Zoo York skateboards' Billy Rohan, Instant Winner is becoming a small wonder in an industry whose intense competition and snooty politics mirror only those of the art world. Dog eat vert dog, if you will. Adding to the momentum, the company just unveiled its maiden skate video, *Nickels and Dimes* (which Metzger art directed), and an innovative new line of 3-D board graphics (glasses included). Not unlike Instant Winner's irony-laden mantra, Metzger's wildly creative output does indeed "bring the radical oh so hard."

www.enginesystem.com, www.theinstantwinner.com

Skateboarders are notorious for talking smack, so don't disappoint us here, Craig. Name the most terrible graphic design trends in skateboarding right now.

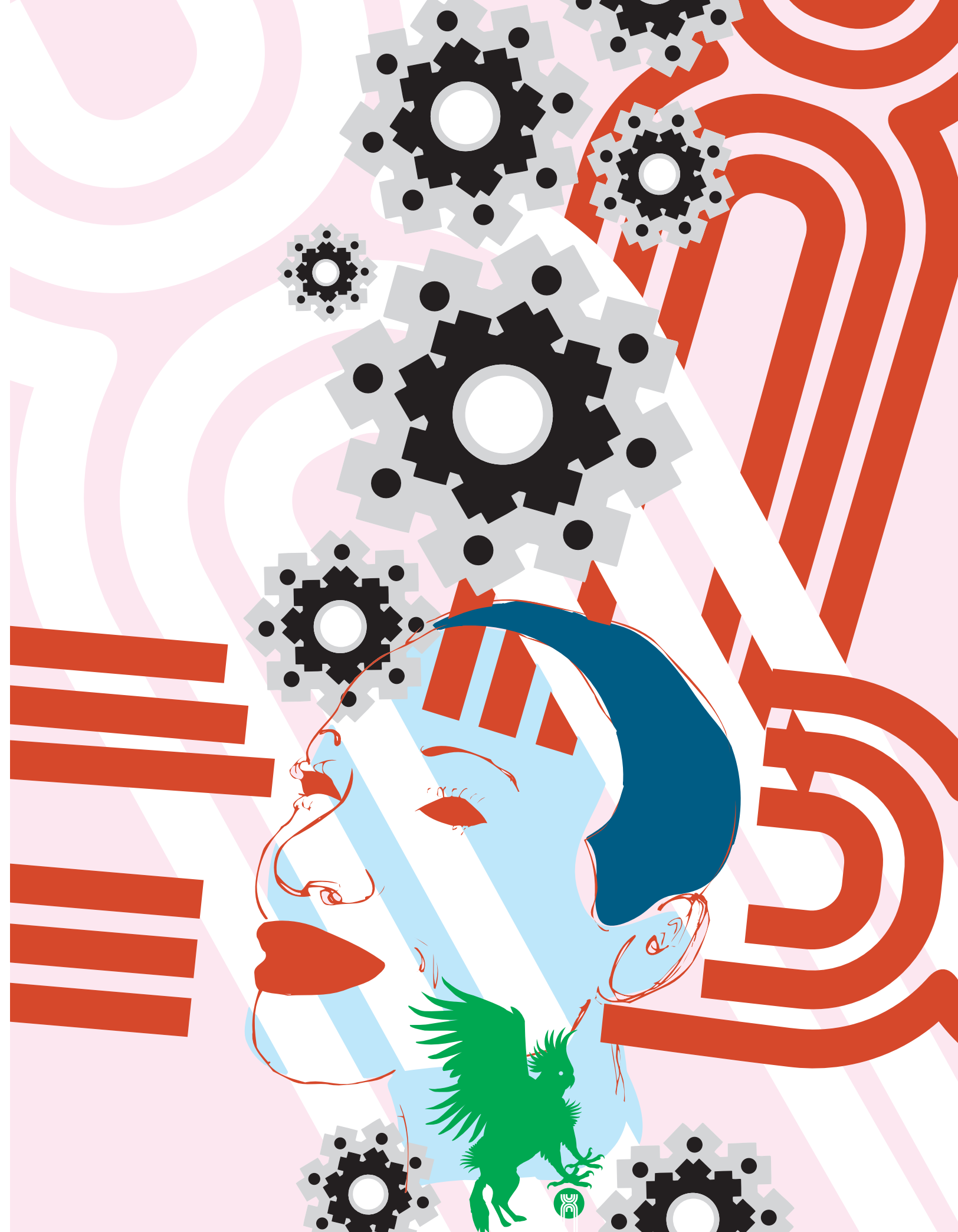
Oh man, I didn't expect questions like this. Well, it seems like a lot of companies aren't putting much thought into their graphics anymore. There are standouts like Alien Workshop and Anti-Hero, but of course they've always stood out since day one. I miss the late '80s in terms of graphic direction and execution.

Skart [skate art] has blown up big time over the past couple years. In fact, I just saw Ed Templeton's work in *Details*. Would it be a mistake to label some of this stuff fine art?

I hate the word "skart"; it almost pigeonholes you as an artist. I think all this new attention to "low-brow" art is amazing and it's about time. It seems, traditionally, to make it in the art world you had to have some sort of education focusing on a discipline. This whole new attention that these artists are getting is just and deserved. They work just as hard as someone with an MFA. But it is sort of trippy seeing people like Ed in *Details*, I must say. Once the masses get ahold of it, it becomes a completely new beast.

You are quite open about your lack of formal training, naming rogue street artists like Henry Darger as influences. Does this type of self-awareness contribute to your art-making process, or is it merely a bird flip to schooled artists?

Darger wasn't necessarily a street artist but more of a strange guy who wrote the biggest novel in history and made pictures to illustrate his book. The great thing about Darger is that he never set out to be an artist—his novels were the main focus of work.





First page: "Fisherwoman's Wharf" (cut paper, acrylic) 22" x 30"

Previous page: exclusive piece for *XLR8R* Vis-Ed

Above: "South American Vacation" (cut paper, acrylic, ink on wood) 11" x 17"

Darger used all sorts of stuff to illustrate: collage, pencil drawings, watercolor, tracings, ink. If he didn't have the skill to pull off what he wanted, he figured out a way to show that. I really admire that determination.

As far as self-awareness, it's merely a way for me to say that all this art that I've been creating comes from real trial and error and most of all it's genuine. Sometimes I wish I had the balls to go to art school when I was younger but I thought I didn't have the skill to be successful.

You've described each piece of your art as "an illustration for a story based on fantasy." Must art always tell a story?

It doesn't always have to, and a lot of artists battle with this. There is all this pressure for your art to have meaning and relate to something. Most of my pieces are my interpretations on experiences or some sort of twisted fantasy—like the type of fantasies you would read while growing up, especially fables. I played a lot of *Dungeons & Dragons* when I was young so I'm sure that has some effect on my work.

From Basquiat to billboard saboteurs, it's safe to say that street art has been very well explored. And with large corporations like Scion and Nike co-opting the art form, it seems as though a lid has been fastened down on its evolution. How do you see street-based art growing—or wilting—in the near future?

I don't participate in street art [like] wheatpasting or going out on midnight bombing missions. I somehow got lumped in this category and it's cool with me but I don't do any street activities. I do support it to the fullest.

I think corporate involvement allows a typically unnoticed art form to get some long overdue recognition and hopefully some money. As far as nurturing the scene goes, I think some of the corporations are making an effort to shine some light on a scene that normally is left in the dark.

But it's one thing to be a patron of the arts and quite another to be a pilferer of the arts. Absolut, for example, could've easily sponsored Phil Frost or Maya Hayuk, but instead they turned their art into a liquor advertisement. I guess the question is, whatever happened to art lovers buying art? A part of me used to think it was lame when a big corporation would profit from an artist's work and credibility. Then I started to think about how this country's government is constantly cutting back on the arts, and selling paintings on the regular doesn't happen for every artist. In an ideal world I wouldn't back the whole paint-on-a-bottle or a sneaker but when you have to pay rent and put food on the table you really have to put your priorities in perspective.

What do you think of those cartoons in the *New Yorker*?

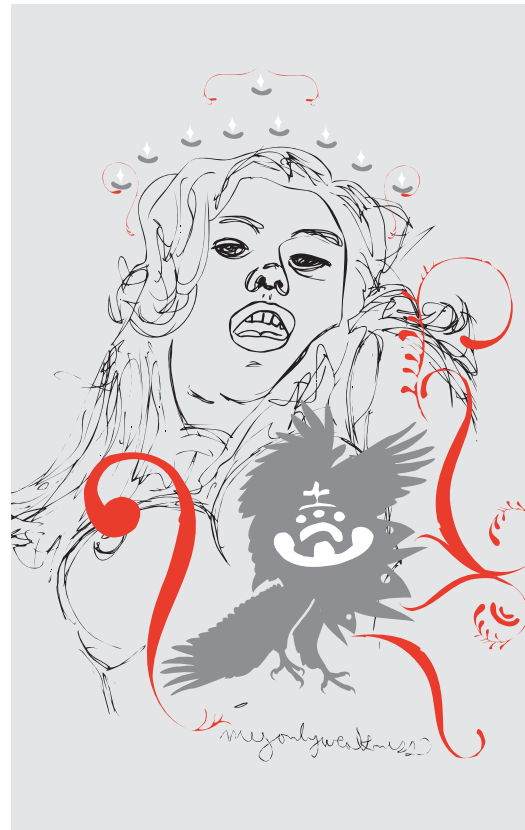
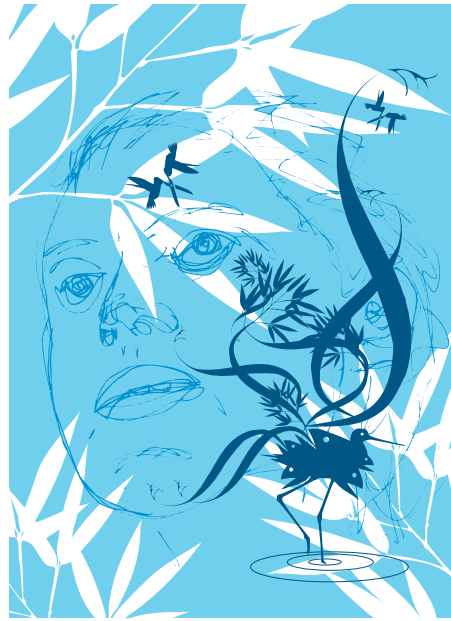
I never read the *New Yorker* and a part of me thinks this is a trick question.

We wouldn't do that to you. Based on that answer, is there one area of your art that you're most insecure about?

Everything [laughs]. I think my drawings are my weakest point. I can't just go with one stroke, for example, when I draw a face. There are like 40 lines to make up one cheek. I think if I was more confident in my line work, the drawings would look like normal



Above: "Trip to Feudal Japan" (cut paper, acrylic) 8" x 10"



Above (clockwise from top left):
 "untitled" (canvas print) 4' x 6"
 "Fairy Tales Gone Bad" (cut paper, silk screen, acrylic) 14" x 18"
 "My Only Weakness" (canvas print) 4' x 6"
 "The Tales You Tell Are Tall" (cut paper, acrylic, silk screen on wood) 9" x 12"

drawings instead of sketches. This insecurity started me using cut paper. I'd draw something and then take an X-Acto blade to it. The knife brought that straight line I was looking for.

Instant Winner just released its maiden video, *Nickels And Dimes*. What kind of approach did you bring to the table, from an art direction standpoint?

I had this idea of basing a video on Coney Island. Coney Island has always been this creepy place to me but also has so much history. I ran the idea by filmer Shea Gonyo and he took it to a level that is super awesome. The video is short (20 minutes) but after you watch it you want to run out and skate.

Would you ever take the same career path as Spike Jonze?

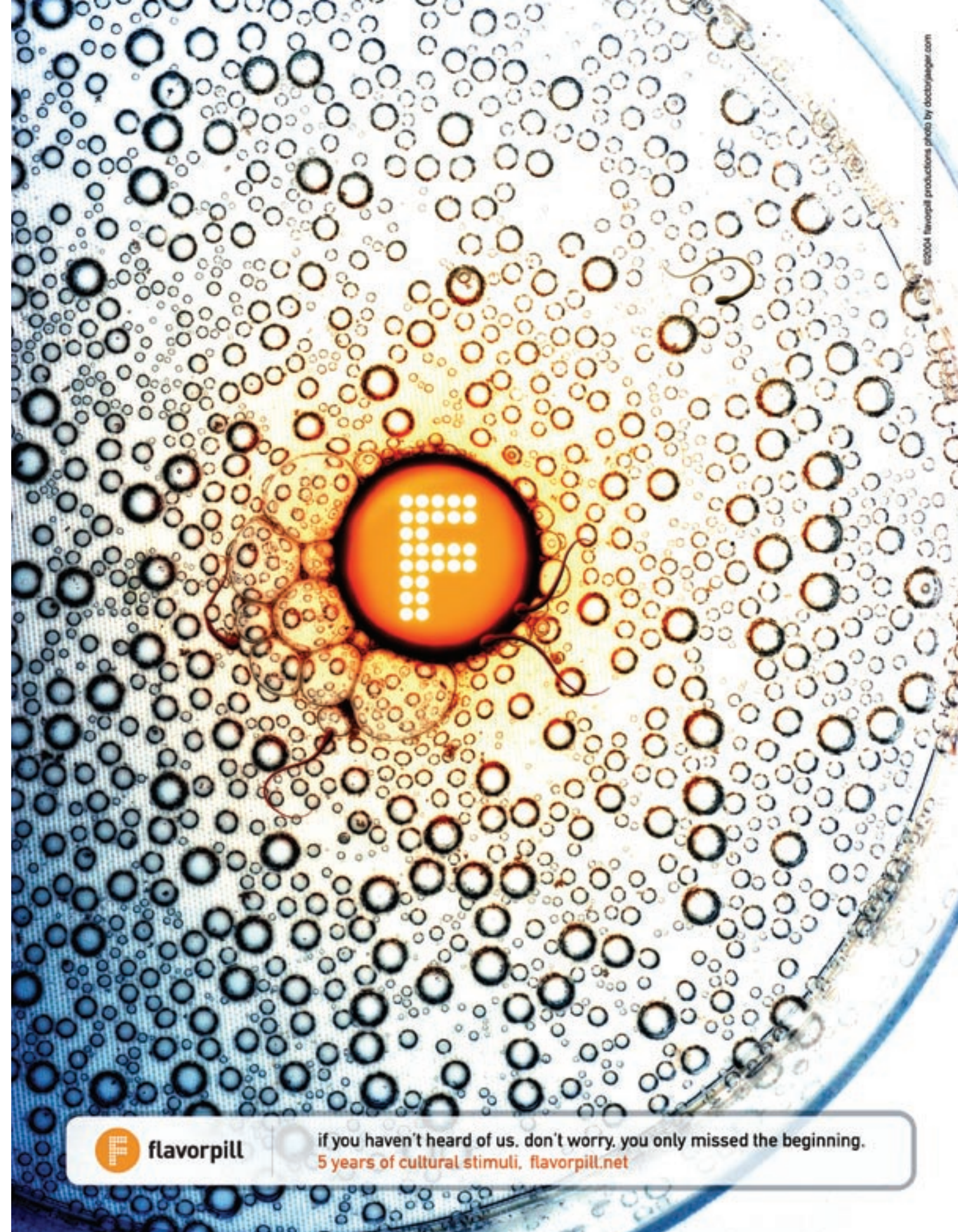
I think I'd rather follow the career path of [Thrasher and Independent Trucks owner] Fausto and own all of skateboarding and its magazines [laughs].

Karen O or Sofia Coppola?

Coppola wine while listening to Karen Black.

Okay Craig, what's the smartest advice you've ever received as an artist?

Always throw the first punch.



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Cabaret Voltaire (l-r: Stephen Mallinder, Chris Watson, Richard H. Kirk), photographed in Sheffield in the late '80s

SHEFFIELD CALLING

ENGLAND'S STEEL CITY, SHEFFIELD, PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN THE EVOLUTION OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC IN THE '80S AND '90S. ROB WOOD GIVES US A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT.

We all have magical moments when our existence was enriched by the power of music. For me, like many other British teenagers, such memories include years of following bands like The Smiths and New Order before stumbling upon the strange new sound of dance music. **The backdrop to this personal discovery was the South Yorkshire city of Sheffield**, a city that has largely been skipped over in the written history of music in favor of passing references to “bleep” techno and Warp Records. Crucial as that sound and label are to the story of Sheffield, the city's legacy also includes pioneering electronic disco acts and the scene that spawned them.

At the end of the '80s, Sheffield was a city still coming to terms with the decline of its native steel industry. Much has been made of this industrial setting as a way of explaining its unique take on US techno—it's easy to make comparisons between the disused car plants of Detroit and the dilapidated mills of the Steel City.

While such an environment may have helped shape a generation of young music heads hungry for something novel, it was the new wave of Sheffield acts in the '80s—including Chakk, Human League, and Cabaret Voltaire—that shaped the local agenda. Like many northern cities of the time, this was a place in love with American electro, funk, soul, hip-hop, and house, but with the added determination to give such sounds a home-grown electronic twist.

Key to aggravating such desires and central to the local scene were two unsung heroes: DJs Winston and Parrot. Together they were champions of black

music; you could find them in small strobe-lit rooms like the one at Club Superman or in the unlikely setting of the City Hall ballroom, where jazz dancers would come from miles around to show off their skills to the techno of Model 500 whilst soul boys danced to electro classics like Hashim's “Al-Naafiysh.” It felt completely raw and exciting, as if we were part of a vital movement.

Sensing this, Rob Mitchell and Steve Beckett opened up the Warp Records shop. Soon they released the first single on their own label: The Forgemasters' “Track With No Name” featuring Winston Hazel on production. Groundbreaking records quickly followed from Nightmares On Wax (still in techno mode), Sweet Exorcist (Parrot and ex-CV Richard Kirk), and Bradford's Unique 3 (a blistering fusion of dub and house). By the time LFO's monumental debut came out, Warp had had several chart hits and Sheffield was known as the home of “bleep” techno.

Things were changing fast, though. The Sheffield sound had helped spark the development of hardcore, a sound many felt lacked soul. The whole youth population of the country was “getting on one” and the UK was hell-bent on refining the American house sound to a state fit for loved-up ears. By the start of the 1990s, dance music was still thrilling—with the added fun of bands like Manchester's Happy Mondays and Stone Roses thrown in—but Sheffield's local identity was being eroded by new sounds from London, Italy, and New York. The ghost of Sheffield circa 1987-91 can still be sensed at nights like Scuba and you can still catch Winston playing to a whole new generation at nights like Electric Chair. Warp has gone on to become the quintessential independent label, and Sheffield itself has been regenerated, ready to confirm an important new place on the musical map. But hundreds of local lads and lassies, and a few students like myself, will always remember Sheffield as it was for a brief, beautiful moment in time: the pulsing, bloody heart of the acid house revolution.

Rob Wood, ex-editor of *Jockey Slut*, is a freelance journalist, DJ, and music consultant.

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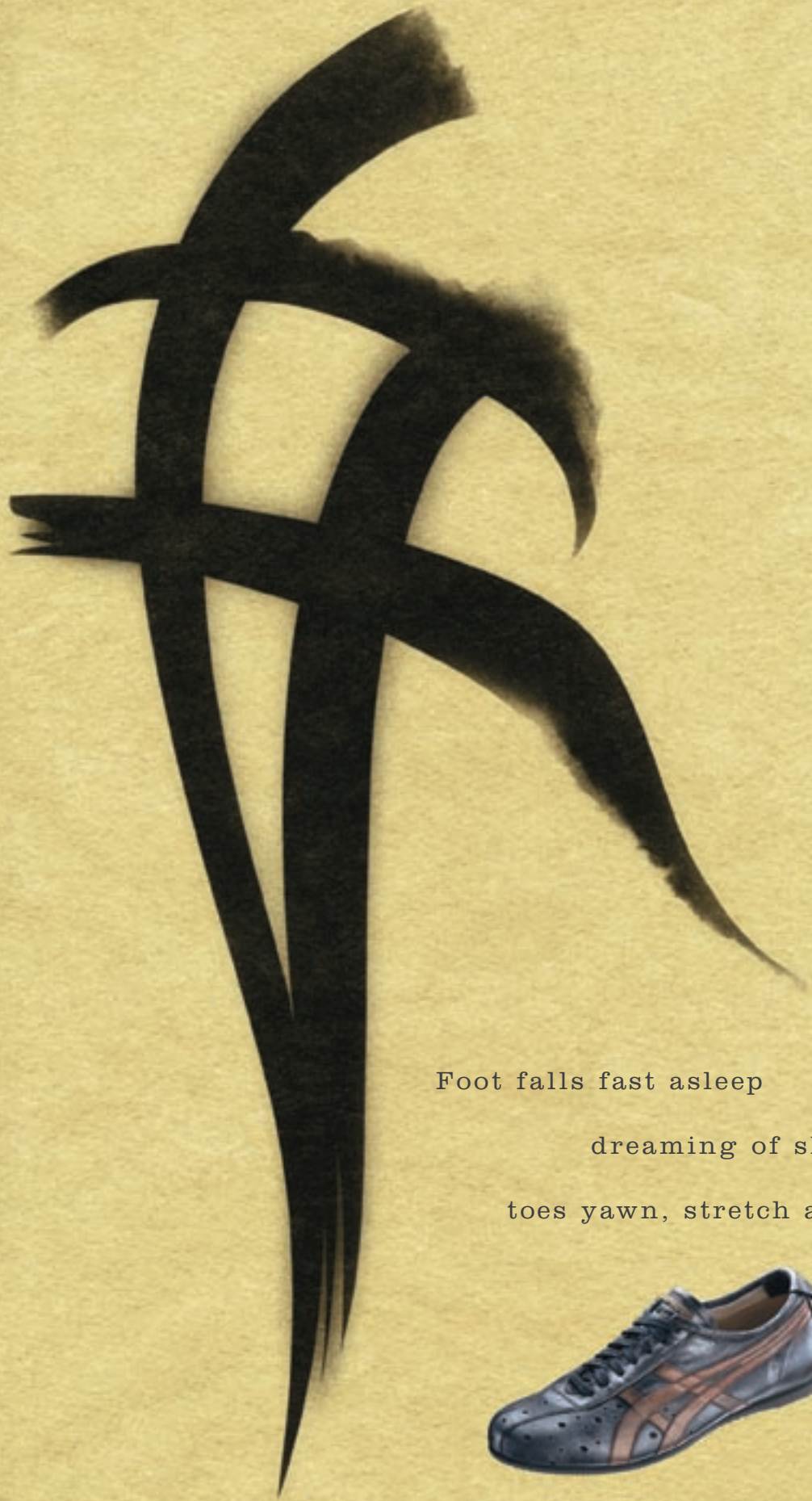
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